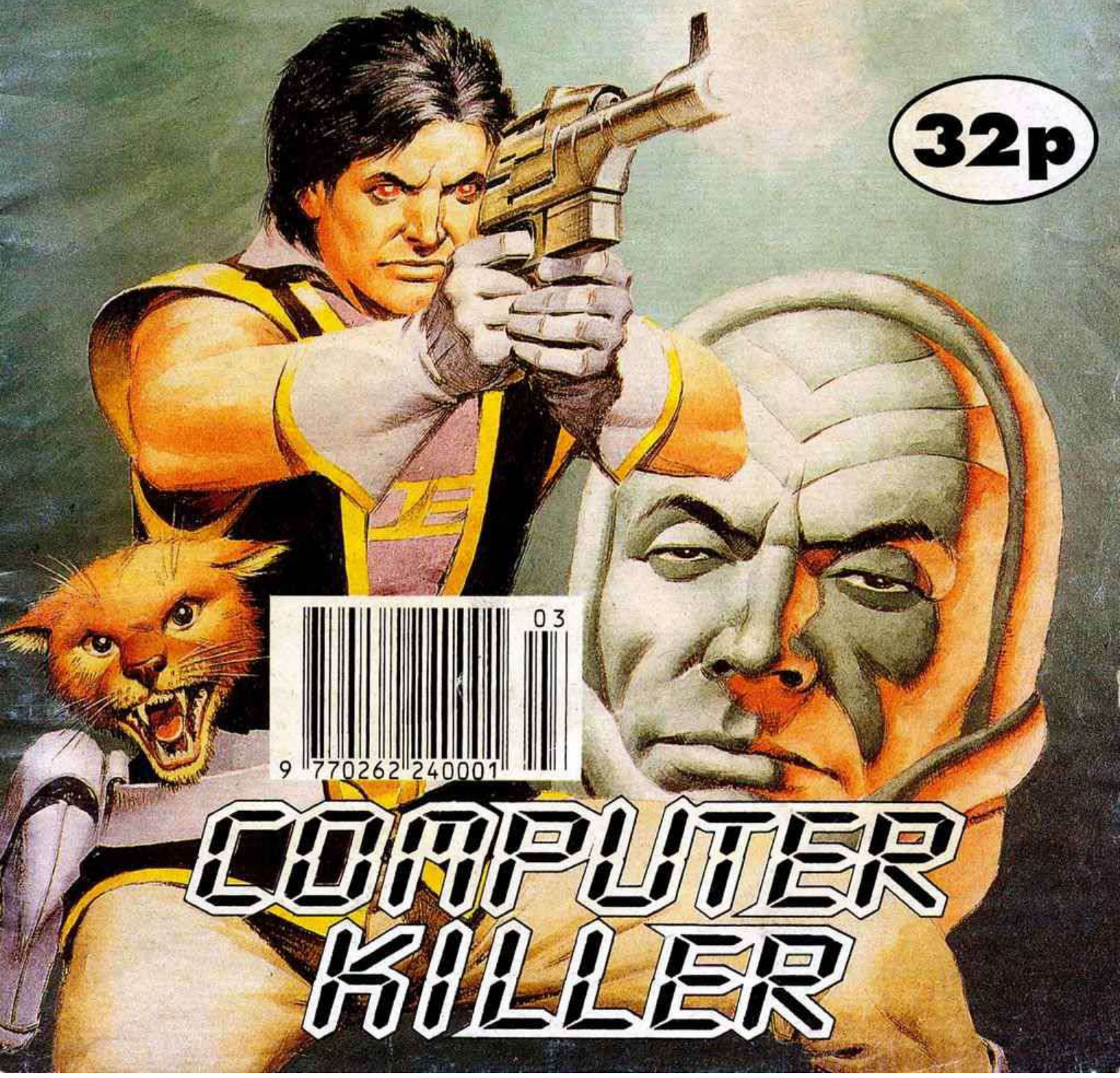
STARBLAZER

FANTASY FICTION IN PICTURES No. 258

32p



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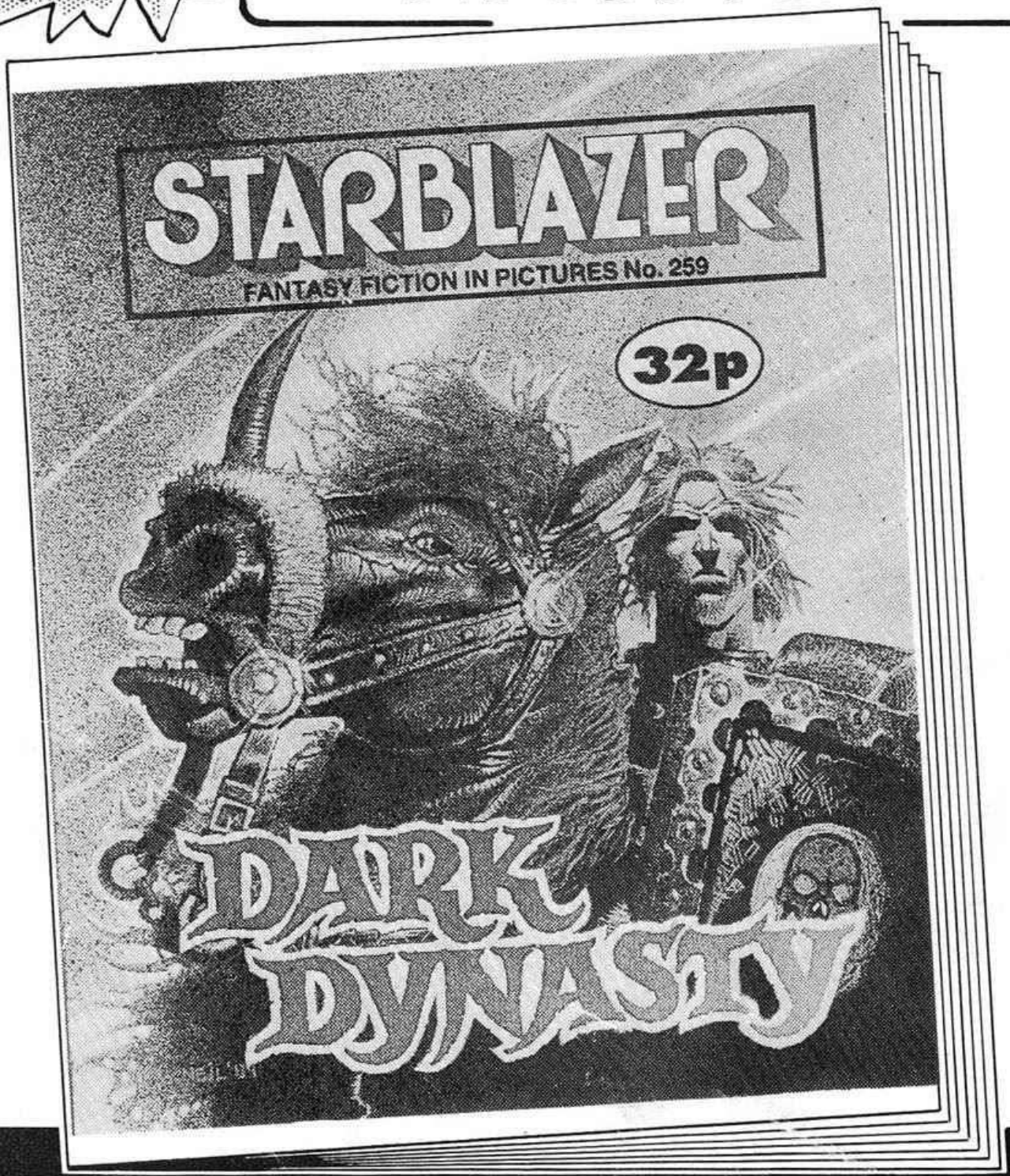
COMPUTER KILLER

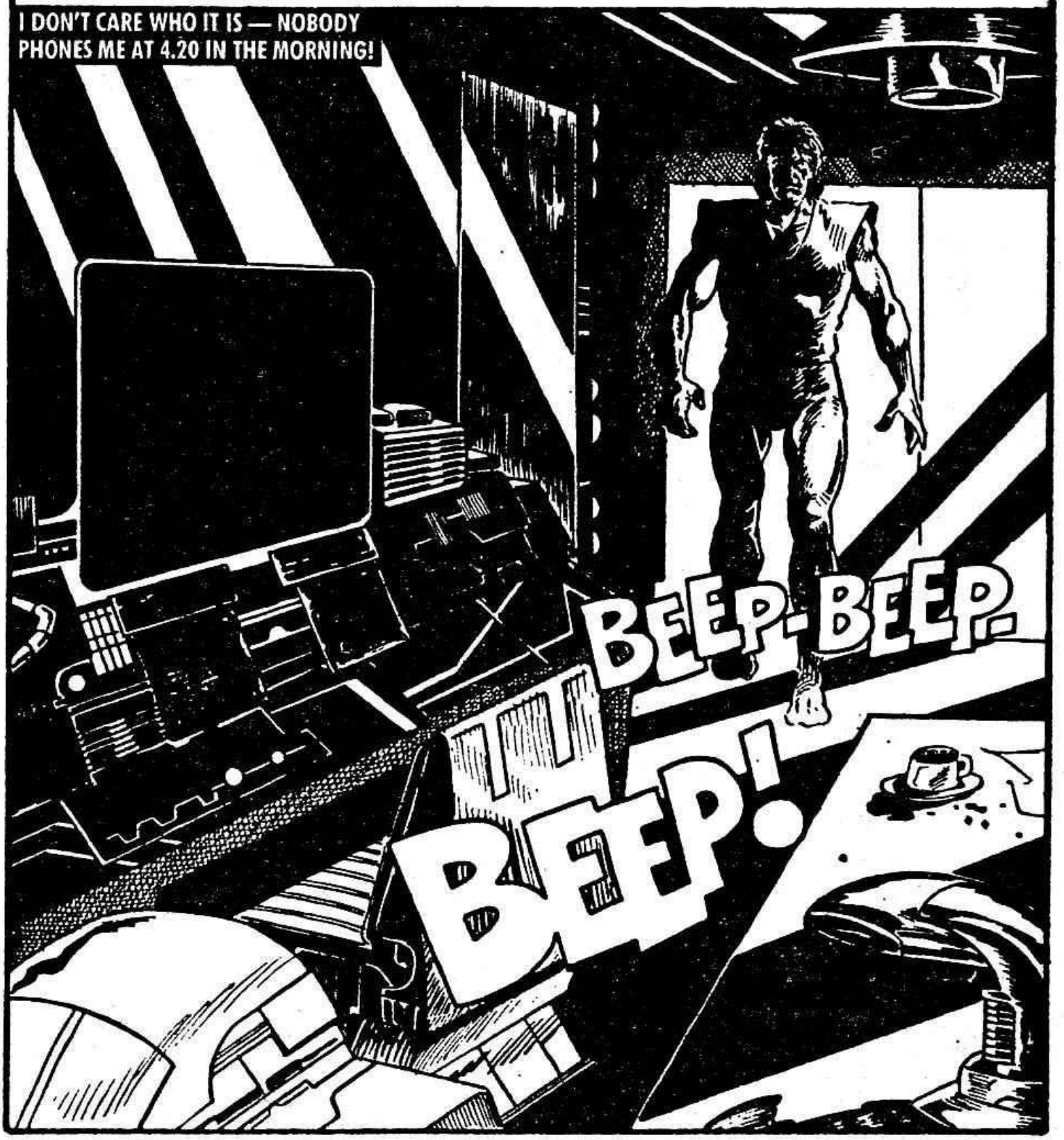
DON'T MISS

THIS MONTH'S OTHER ACTION-PACKED ADVENTURE

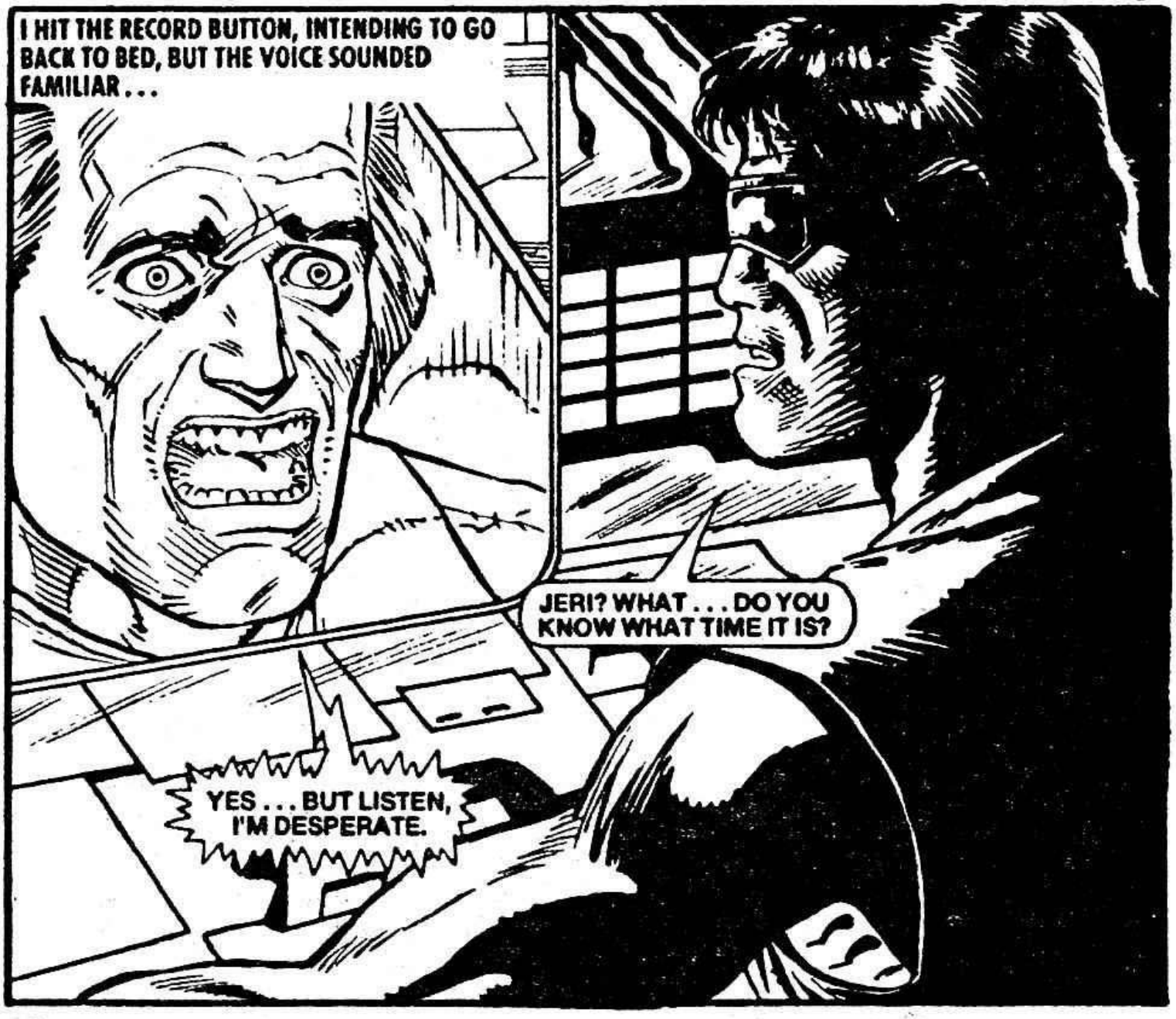


NOW ON SALE

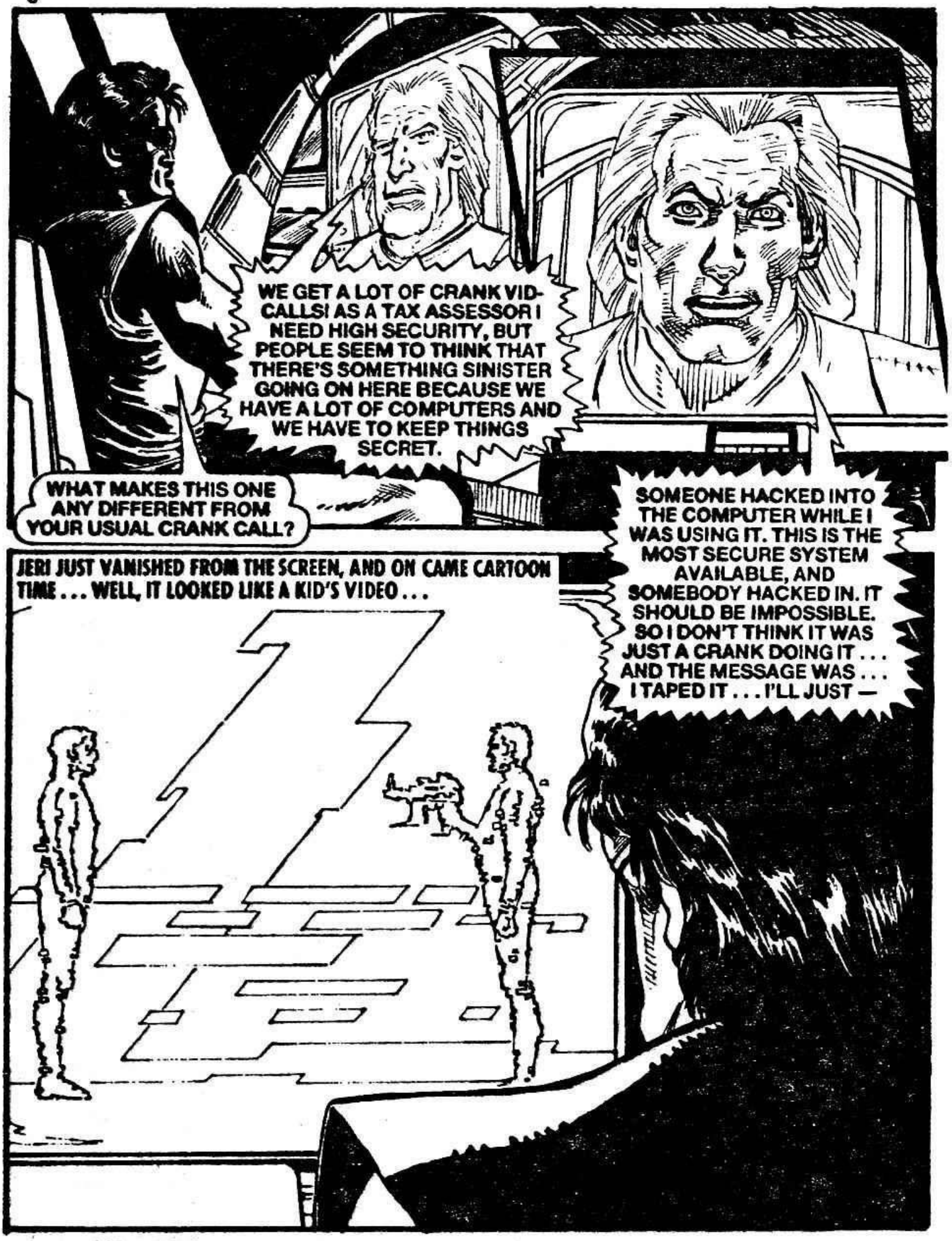
COMPUTER KILLER

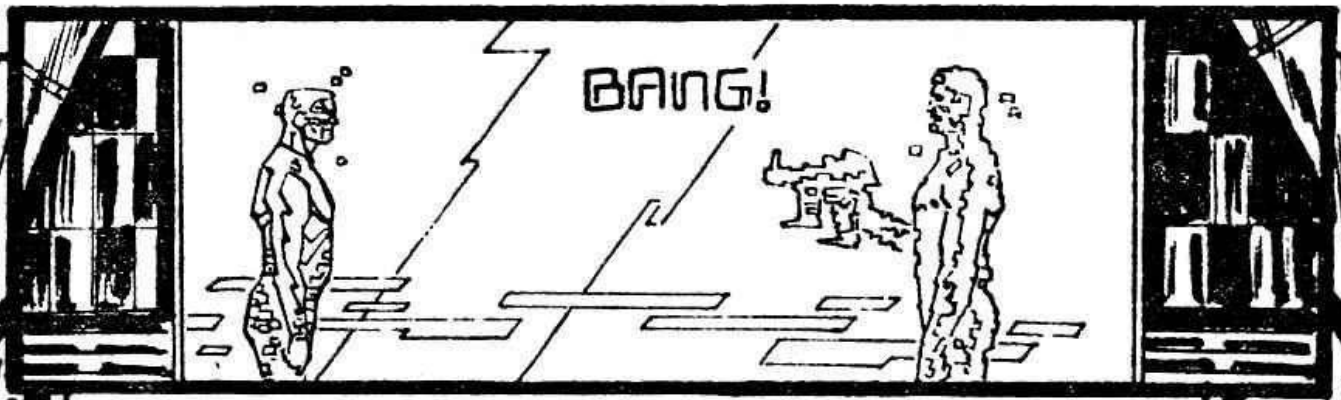


WHO WOULD PHONE ME ANYWAY? NOT A CLIENT — I DON'T *HAVE* LUXURIES LIKE CLIENTS.
WHERE ARE MY GLASSES?
CLICK!
I NEEDED MY GLASSES TO SEE. WELL, SORT OF — THANKS TO AN ACCIDENT I COULD ACTUALLY SEE WITHOUT THEM, BUT ONLY IN INFRA-RED.
AH! MY SHADES! OKAY . . . I'M COMING.
THIS IS KAYN INVESTIGATIONS. I'M NOT HERE RIGHT NOW, BUT IF YOU WANT TO LEAVE A MESSAGE, SPEAK AFTER YOU HEAR —
MIKAL? . . . MIKAL . . . THIS IS URGENT!

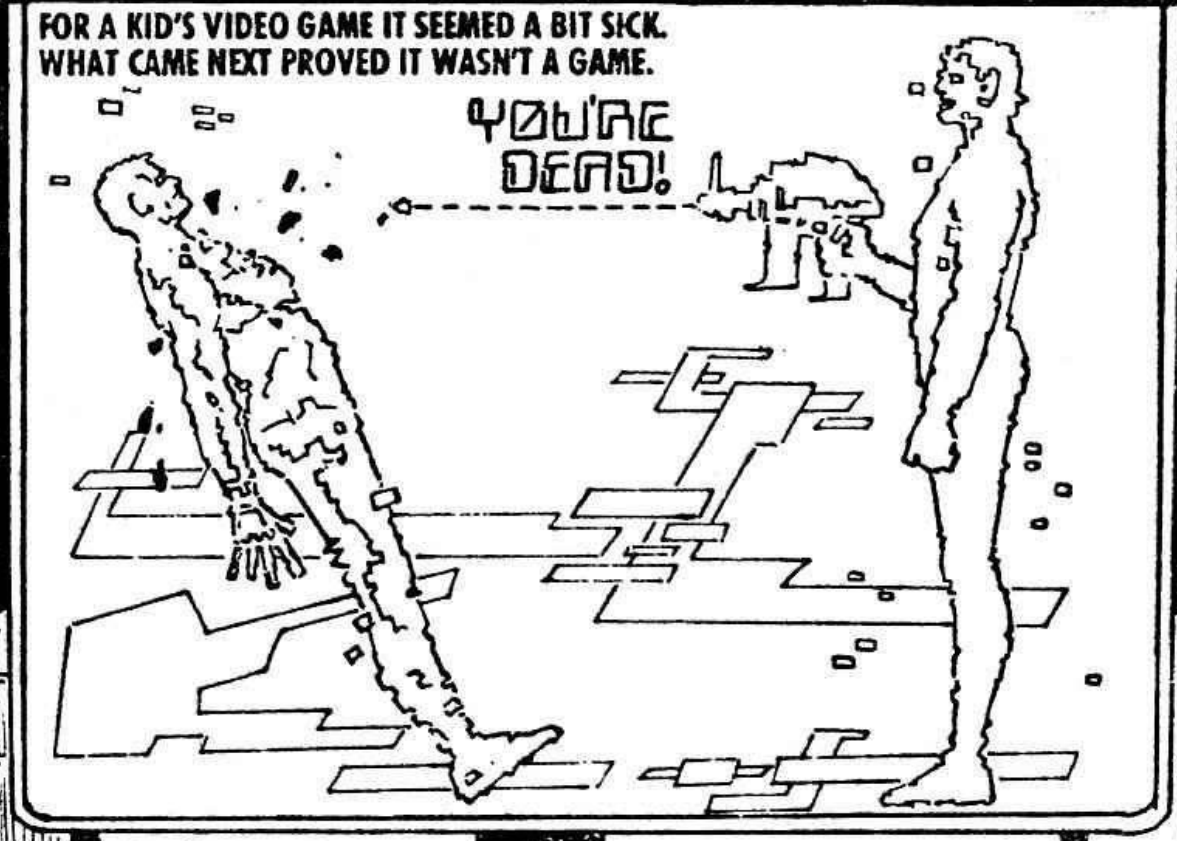

I HIT THE RECORD BUTTON, INTENDING TO GO BACK TO BED, BUT THE VOICE SOUNDED FAMILIAR . . .
JERI? WHAT . . . DO YOU KNOW WHAT TIME IT IS?
YES . . . BUT LISTEN, I'M DESPERATE.

CALM DOWN, JERI, AND TELL ME WHAT'S SO URGENT.
I THINK SOMEONE'S TRYING TO KILL ME.

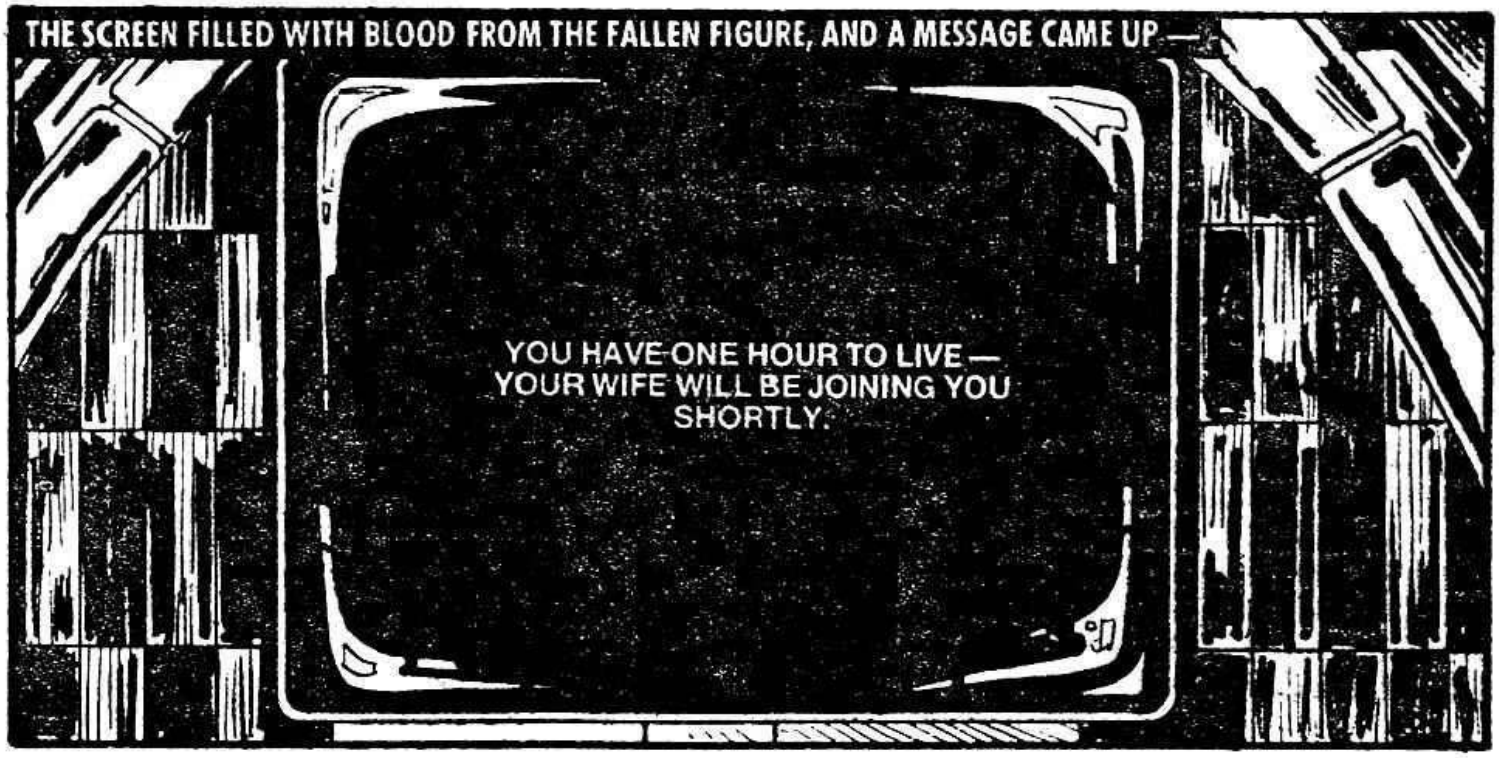

WE GET A LOT OF CRANK VID-CALLS! AS A TAX ASSESSOR I NEED HIGH SECURITY, BUT PEOPLE SEEM TO THINK THAT THERE'S SOMETHING SINISTER GOING ON HERE BECAUSE WE HAVE A LOT OF COMPUTERS AND WE HAVE TO KEEP THINGS SECRET.
WHAT MAKES THIS ONE ANY DIFFERENT FROM YOUR USUAL CRANK CALL?
SOMEONE HACKED INTO THE COMPUTER WHILE I WAS USING IT. THIS IS THE MOST SECURE SYSTEM AVAILABLE, AND SOMEBODY HACKED IN. IT SHOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE. SO I DON'T THINK IT WAS JUST A CRANK DOING IT . . . AND THE MESSAGE WAS . . . I TAPED IT . . . I'LL JUST —
JERI JUST VANISHED FROM THE SCREEN, AND ON CAME CARTOON TIME . . . WELL, IT LOOKED LIKE A KID'S VIDEO . . .



FOR A KID'S VIDEO GAME IT SEEMED A BIT SICK.
WHAT CAME NEXT PROVED IT WASN'T A GAME.

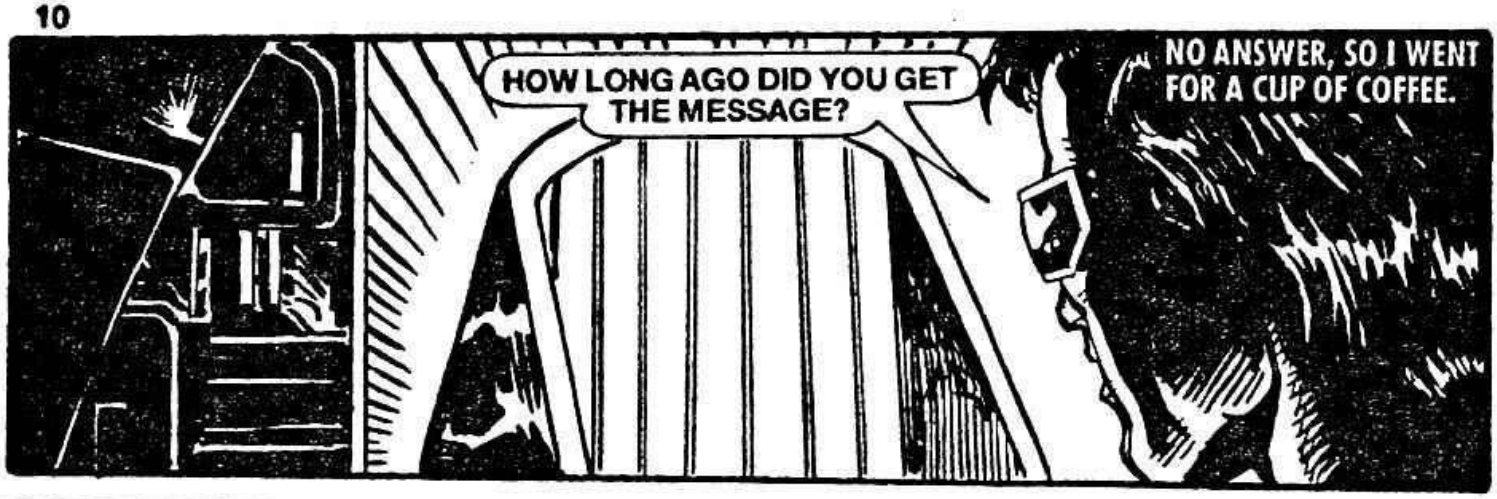


THE SCREEN FILLED WITH BLOOD FROM THE FALLEN FIGURE, AND A MESSAGE CAME UP—



JERI CAME BACK ON SCREEN. HE DIDN'T LOOK TOO GOOD. I WASN'T FEELING TOO GOOD MYSELF . . . I HAD A BAD, BAD FEELING.
I TRIED TO CALL LYNDA, MIKAL. THE VID-LINK'S BROKEN. I TRIED TO CALL ONE OF OUR NEIGHBOURS BUT THE WHOLE BLOCK'S BEEN SHUT DOWN! YOU'VE GOT TO GET HER OUT OF THE APARTMENT, MIKAL. GET HER SOMEPLACE SAFE.
THEIR APARTMENT WASN'T FAR AWAY. I'D KNOWN JERI AND LYNDA FOSKER FOR YEARS. LONG BEFORE JERI JOINED THE PERSONAL REVENUE ASSESSORS — TAX MEN TO YOU AND ME. THEY WERE TWO PEOPLE I COULD TRULY CALL FRIENDS, AND I DIDN'T WANT TO LOSE THEM.
I'LL BRING HER BACK HERE. WHAT ABOUT YOU?

THIS IS A TOP-SECURITY BASE. I'M SAFER HERE THAN ANYWHERE ELSE. SECURITY ARE DOING A PATROL RIGHT NOW. THEY'RE CHECKING THE DOOR!
I ALMOST SAID 'THE COMPUTER WAS SUPPOSED TO BE SECURE AS WELL' BUT I DIDN'T GET A CHANCE. THERE WAS A NOISE IN THE BACKGROUND.
WHO'S THERE, JERI?
SECURITY! I'LL HAVE TO LET THEM IN. I'LL ONLY BE A SECOND . . .

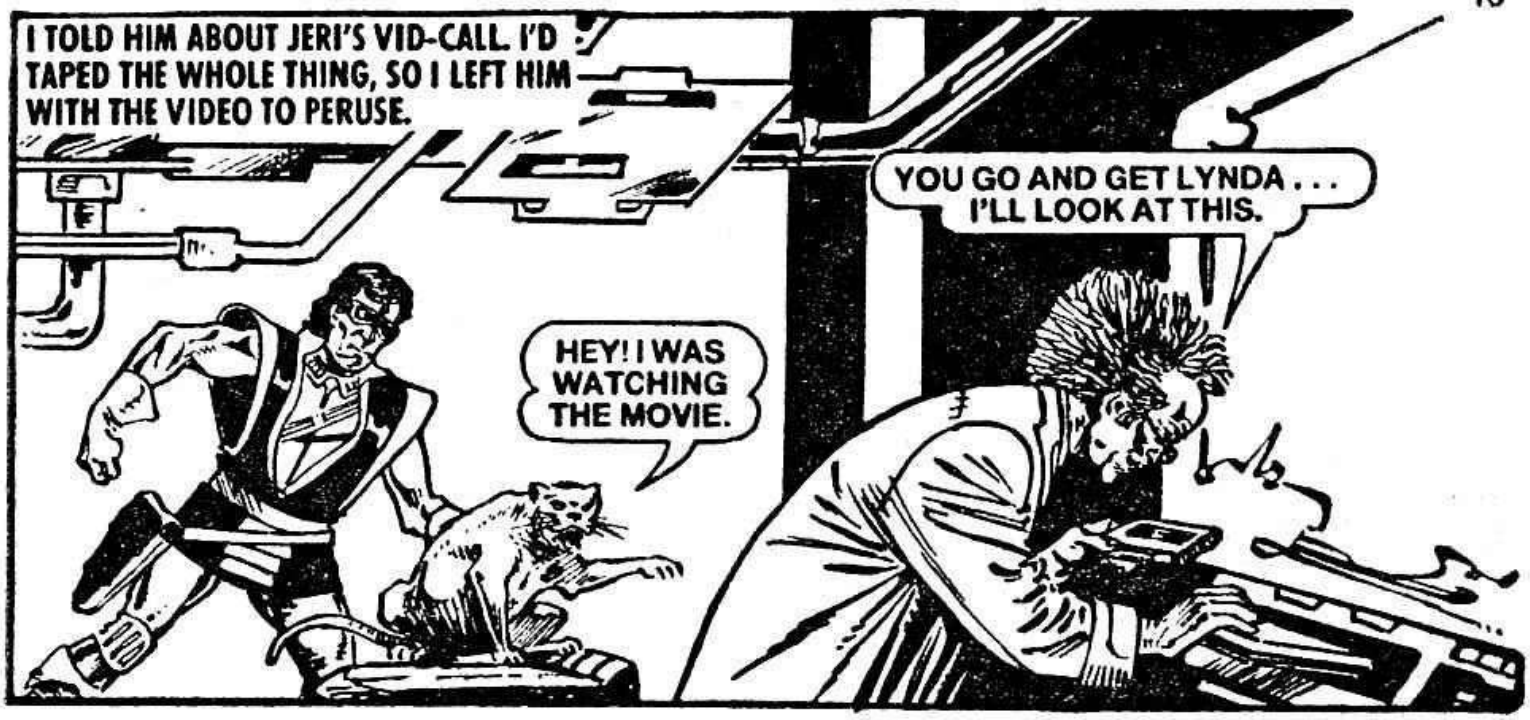

HOW LONG AGO DID YOU GET THE MESSAGE?
NO ANSWER, SO I WENT FOR A CUP OF COFFEE.

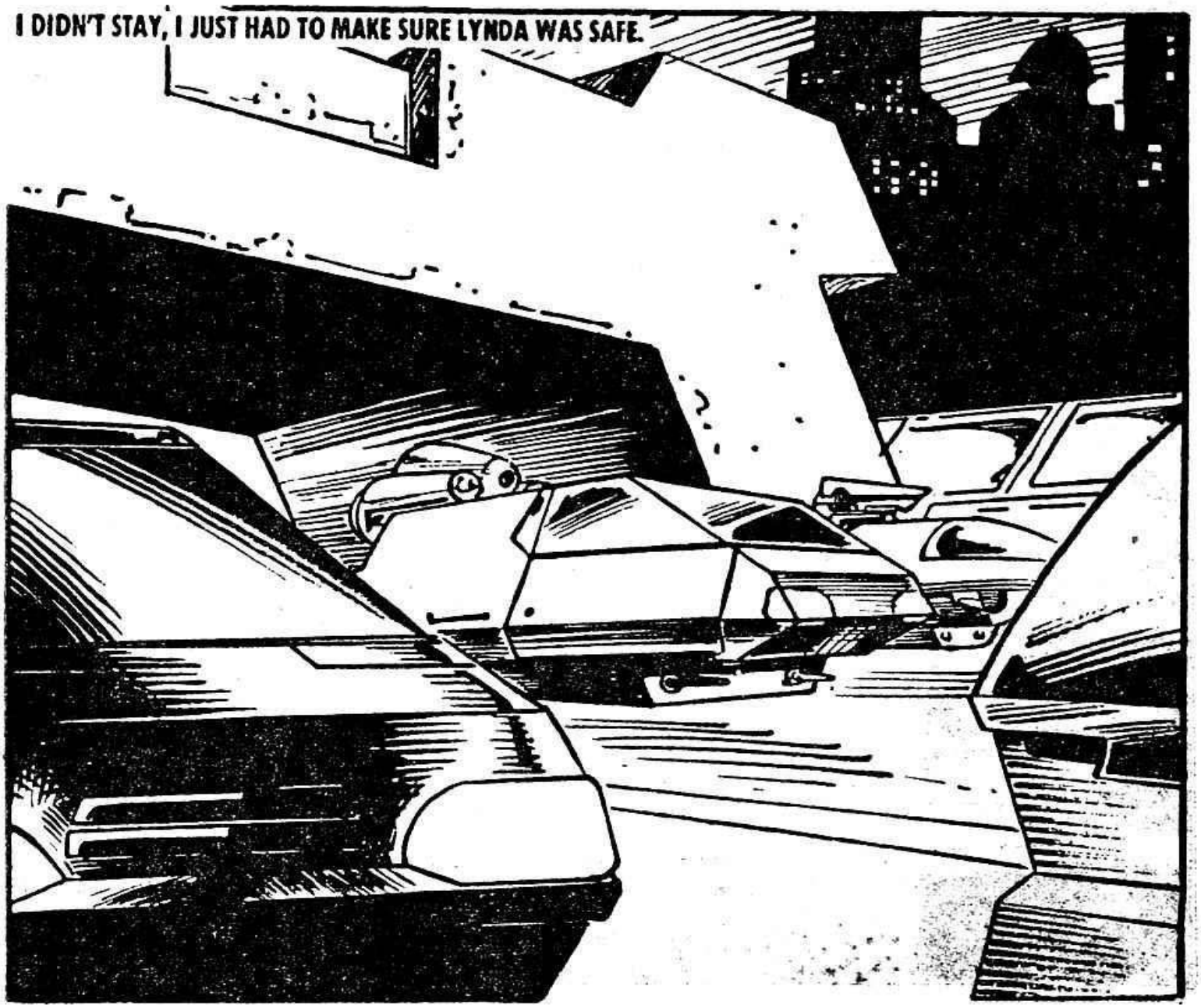
I HAD ENOUGH TIME TO CHANGE AND WAS READY FOR ACTION. I WISH I'D BEEN READY FOR WHAT HAPPENED NEXT.
EH?
BLAM!

I TURNED THE VOLUME UP FULL, BUT THERE WAS NOTHING.
JERI? JERI? ANSWER ME!
I COULDN'T HEAR A THING.

THEN THE SCREEN BLANKED OUT AND THERE WAS ONLY WHITE NOISE.
ANSWER ME!
I WASTED FIVE MINUTES WITH THE OPERATOR TRYING TO GET A LINE INTO THE BASE, BUT WITH NO JOY. THERE WAS NOTHING I COULD DO. MY FIRST CONCERN HAD TO BE GETTING LYNDA OUT OF THE APARTMENT, THEN I'D FIND OUT WHAT HAD HAPPENED TO JERI.
MY MIND COULDN'T FIGURE OUT WHAT WAS HAPPENING . . . ALL I KNEW WAS THAT I HAD TO BE QUICK.

NICE CAR. I HIRED IT FOR A JOB — CAN YOU BELIEVE THIS? A GUY ASKS ME TO FIND THIS GIRL. I HIRED THE FLYER BECAUSE I NEEDED TRANSPORT, AND THE RETAINER PAID THE DEPOSIT. I FIND THE GIRL, AND THE TWO OF THEM ELOPE BEFORE I GET PAID! AND I'M LEFT WITH A FLYER I CAN'T PAY THE HIRE CHARGE OF, SO I CAN'T RETURN IT UNTIL I GET CREDS . . .
I'M RAMBLING. TRYING TO TAKE MY MIND OFF WHAT'S HAPPENED.
FIRST I STOPPED OFF AT POP'S PLACE. POP PERZ — ECCENTRIC GENIUS, A FRIEND . . . PROBABLY MY ONLY ONE IN NEW MOSCOW — NOW!
COME IN, KAYN. NO-ONE ELSE WOULD ARRIVE AT THIS TIME OF THE MORNING. NICE OF YOU TO USE THE DOOR FOR A CHANGE.

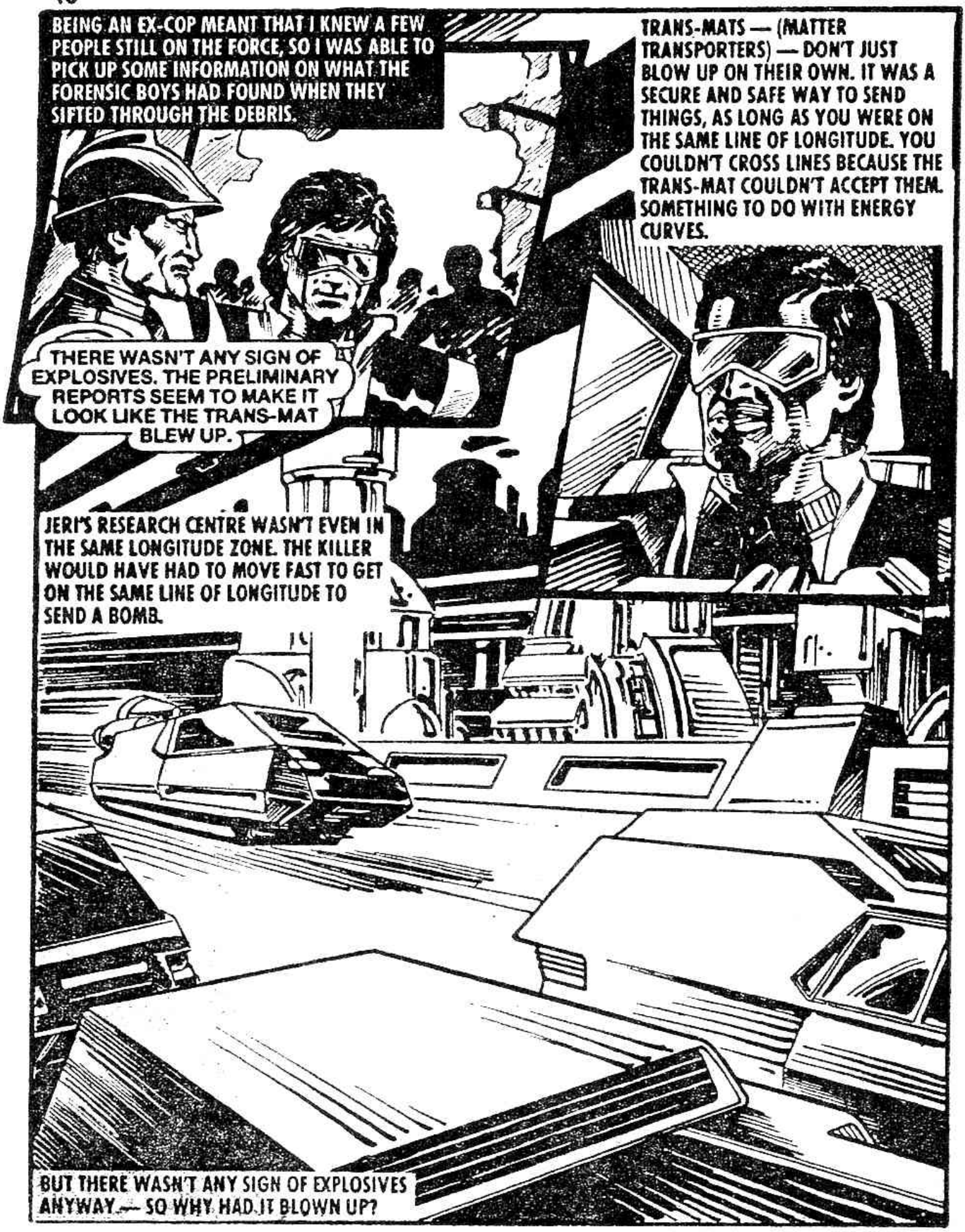

I TOLD HIM ABOUT JERI'S VID-CALL. I'D TAPED THE WHOLE THING, SO I LEFT HIM WITH THE VIDEO TO PERUSE.
YOU GO AND GET LYNDA . . . I'LL LOOK AT THIS.
HEY! I WAS WATCHING THE MOVIE.


I DIDN'T STAY, I JUST HAD TO MAKE SURE LYNDA WAS SAFE.

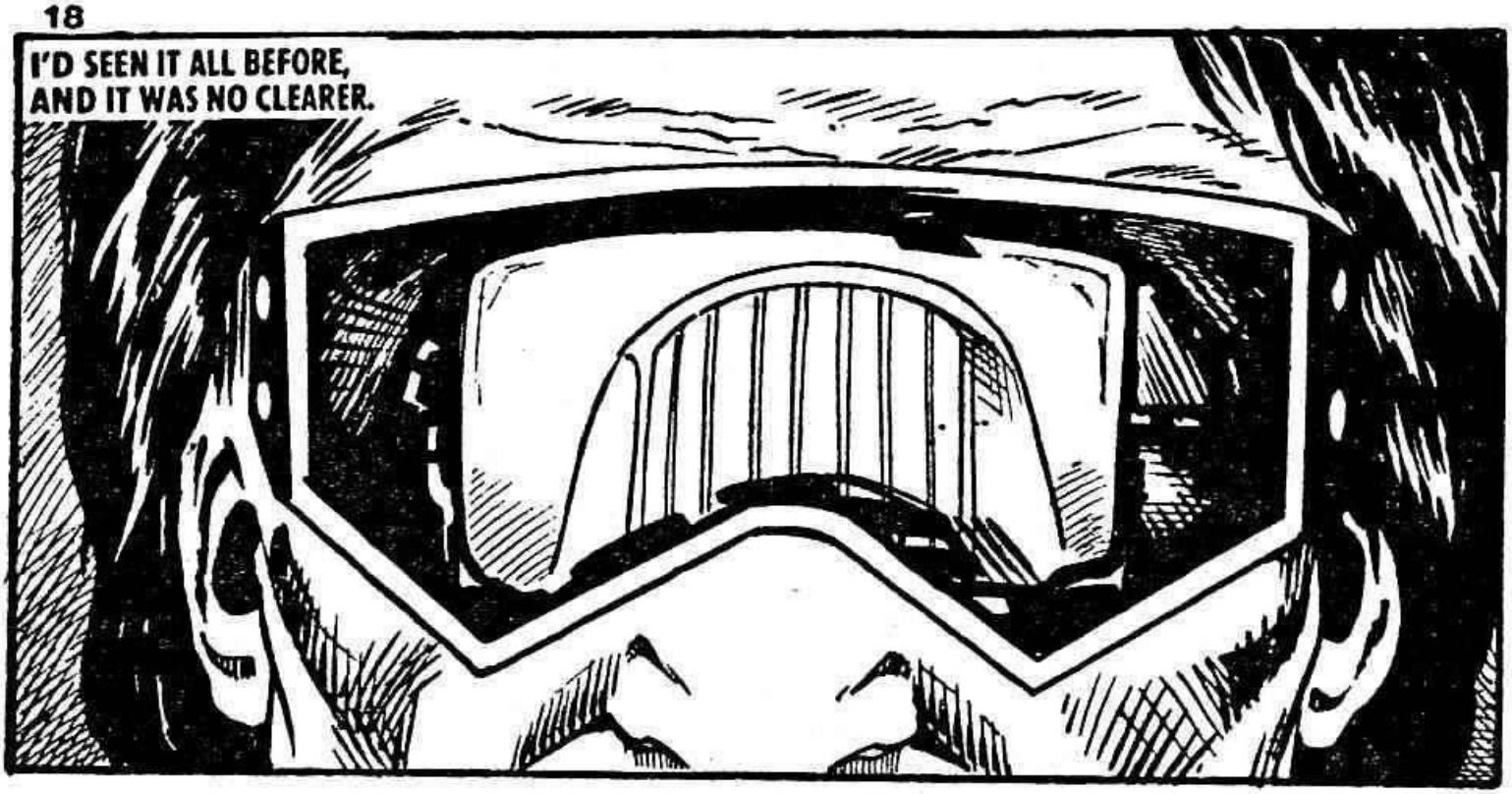
THE APARTMENT WAS OFF THE WEST BERLIN FREEWAY. THE FLYER ATE UP THE MILES, BUT THE CLOSER I GOT THE WORSE I FELT. HOW DO YOU TELL A FRIEND THAT YOU THINK YOU'VE WITNESSED HER HUSBAND'S MURDER.
THAT'S LYNDA'S BLOCK . . .

I SOMEHOW KNEW THAT THE EXPLOSION WAS IN LYNDA'S APARTMENT.
BOOM

THE COPS ARRIVED SOON AFTER. I COULDN'T TELL THEM ANYTHING. IF I ADMITTED KNOWING ANYONE THEY'D HAVE BEEN QUIZZING ME FOR DAYS, AND I DIDN'T HAVE THAT SORT OF TIME.
THAT'S FAR ENOUGH! THIS AREA IS CLOSED.
BUT I'D GOT ENOUGH . . . THE COP WAS WITH THE SEVENTH PRECINCT.

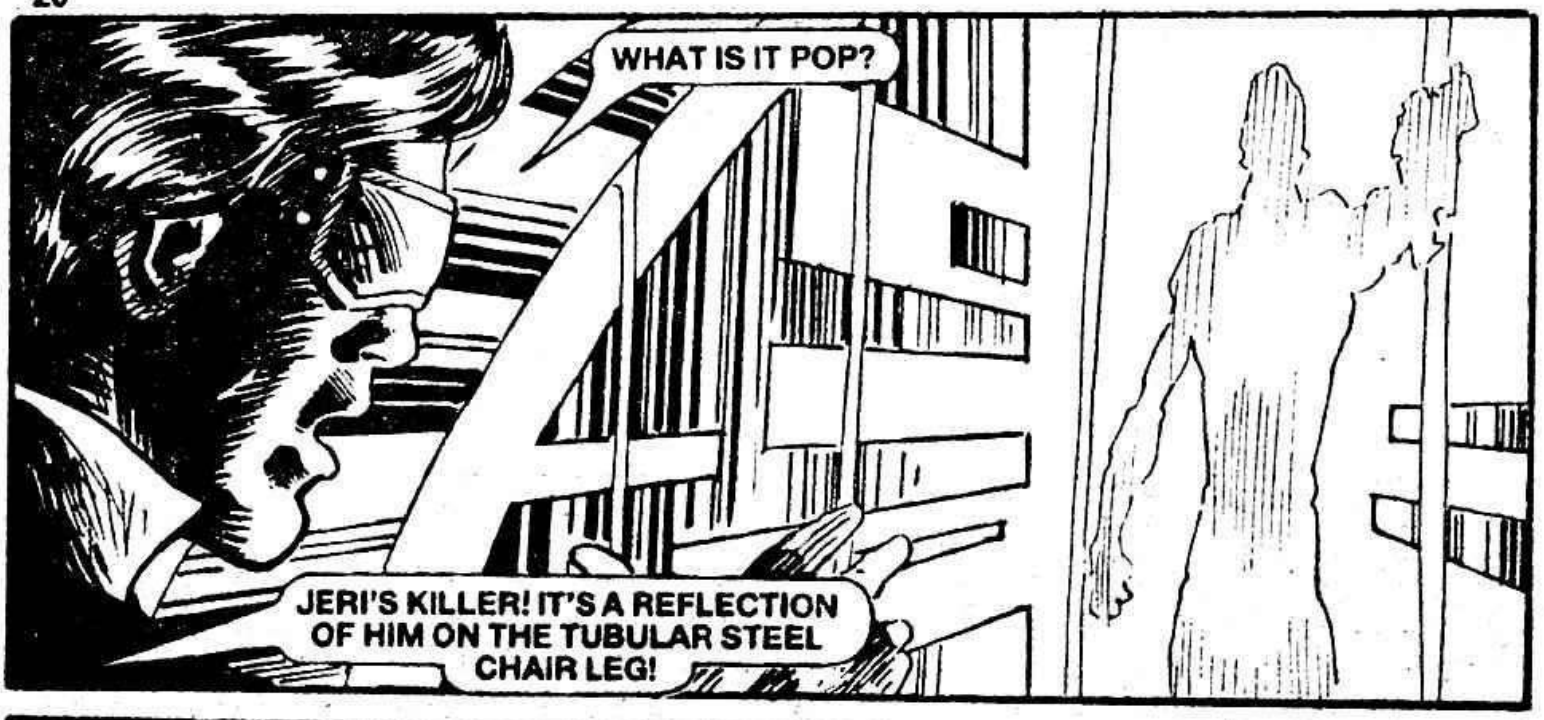

BEING AN EX-COP MEANT THAT I KNEW A FEW PEOPLE STILL ON THE FORCE, SO I WAS ABLE TO PICK UP SOME INFORMATION ON WHAT THE FORENSIC BOYS HAD FOUND WHEN THEY SIFTED THROUGH THE DEBRIS.
TRANS-MATS — (MATTER TRANSPORTERS) — DON'T JUST BLOW UP ON THEIR OWN. IT WAS A SECURE AND SAFE WAY TO SEND THINGS, AS LONG AS YOU WERE ON THE SAME LINE OF LONGITUDE. YOU COULDN'T CROSS LINES BECAUSE THE TRANS-MAT COULDN'T ACCEPT THEM. SOMETHING TO DO WITH ENERGY CURVES.
THERE WASN'T ANY SIGN OF EXPLOSIVES. THE PRELIMINARY REPORTS SEEM TO MAKE IT LOOK LIKE THE TRANS-MAT BLEW UP.
JERI'S RESEARCH CENTRE WASN'T EVEN IN THE SAME LONGITUDE ZONE. THE KILLER WOULD HAVE HAD TO MOVE FAST TO GET ON THE SAME LINE OF LONGITUDE TO SEND A BOMB.
BUT THERE WASN'T ANY SIGN OF EXPLOSIVES ANYWAY — SO WHY HAD IT BLOWN UP?

DAYLIGHT WAS CREEPING OVER THE NEW MOSCOW SUBURBS BY THE TIME I GOT BACK TO POP'S PLACE.
HI, POP. DID YOU GET ANYTHING FROM THAT VIDEO?
A SEVERE HEADACHE. REALLY, KAYN, YOU SHOULD TAKE MORE CARE OF DELICATE EQUIPMENT. THE DISTORTION ON THAT RECORDING . . .
WASN'T THERE ANYTHING?
YES! COME THROUGH AND WE CAN WATCH IT ON THE BIG SCREEN.
THIS IS JUST BEFORE JERI DISAPPEARS!
I'LL HAVE TO LET THEM IN. I'LL ONLY BE —


I'D SEEN IT ALL BEFORE, AND IT WAS NO CLEARER.

BANG! BLOOD, THEN THERE WAS NOTHING.

THERE . . . STOP THE VIDEO JUST THERE.
I DIDN'T SEE . . .
NO, NOT YET. I'LL HAVE TO ENLARGE THE IMAGE.
I STILL DON'T . . .

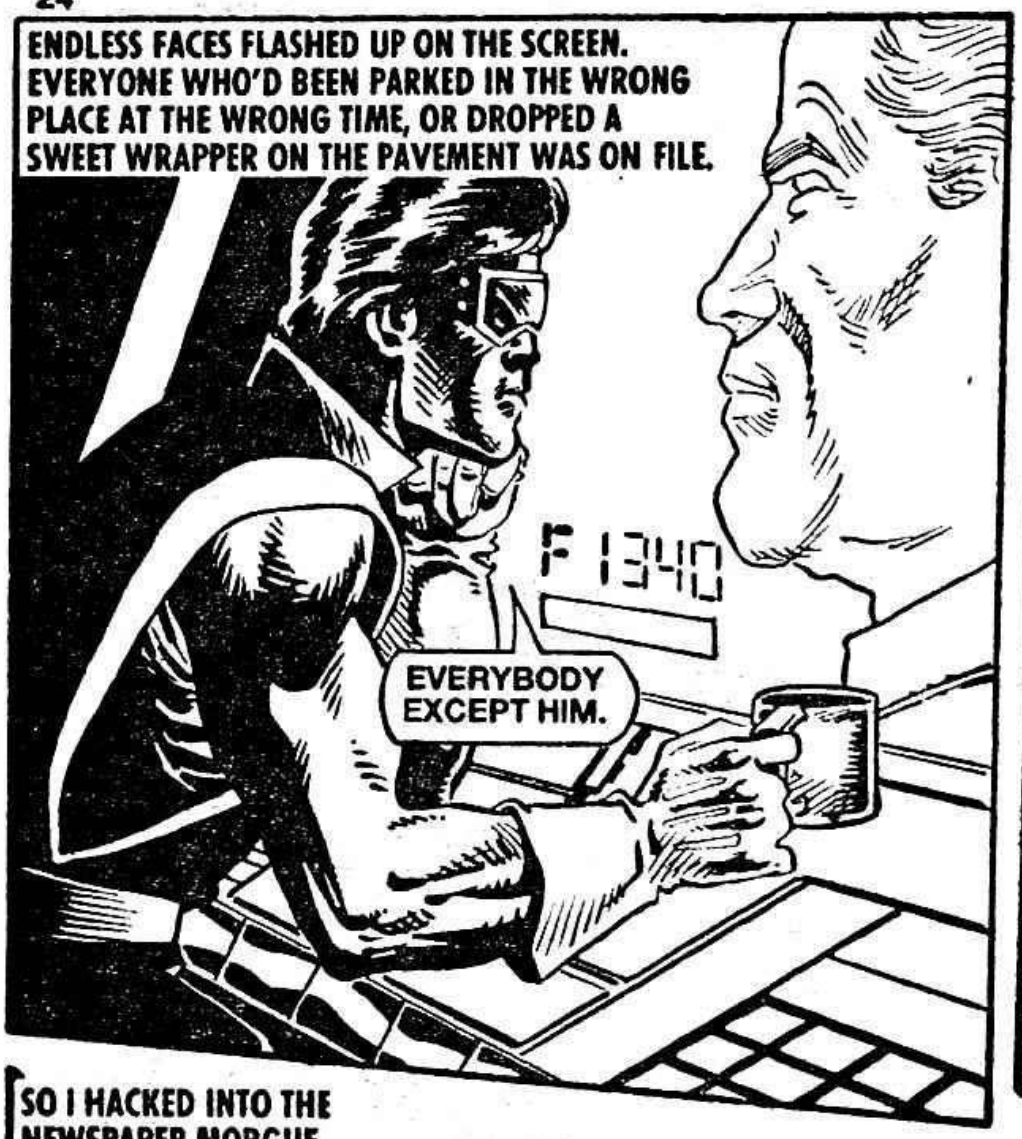

WHAT IS IT POP?
JERI'S KILLER! IT'S A REFLECTION OF HIM ON THE TUBULAR STEEL CHAIR LEG!

AND I USED THE COMPUTER'S GRAPHICS TO GIVE ME AN UNDISTORTED PRINT.

I KNOW THEY WERE FRIENDS, BUT DON'T TURN THIS INTO A VENDETTA. GO TO THE POLICE!
NO, POP. THIS ONE IS PERSONAL.
I DIDN'T KNOW WHERE TO START . . . SO I LOOKED FOR SMILEY. SMILEY WAS A FIXER — IF YOU WANTED SOMETHING, SMILEY COULD GET IT.
HELLO, SMILEY. I NEED A NAME!
KAYN! YOU'LL GET NOTHING FROM ME.
FAIR ENOUGH . . . I'LL CALL THE POLICE AND TELL THEM YOU DID THE SUPERMARKET JOB.
EH? NOTHING TO DO WITH ME.

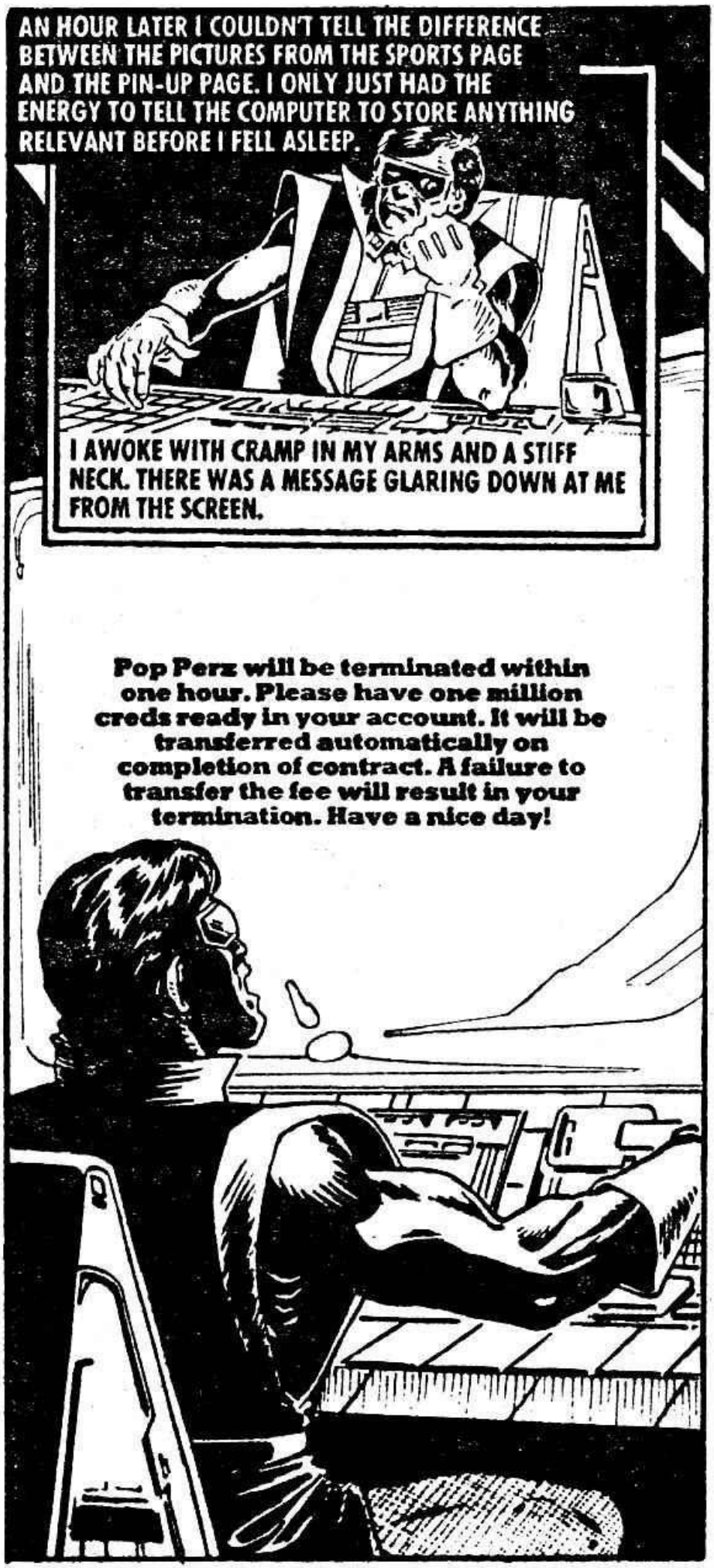
I KNOW THAT, YOU KNOW THAT — BUT THE COPS DON'T. A NAME, OR I MAKE A PHONE CALL.
DON'T KNOW ANY NAME!
VIDPHONE
RIGHT, IT'S THE POLICE!
HOLD IT, KAYN! I KNOW THE FACE, BUT IT DOESN'T HAVE A NAME. NOBODY'S EVER MET HIM.
HOW DOES HE FIX CONTRACTS THEN?
COMPUTER! KEY IN CODE 4039 AND LEAVE A MESSAGE. HE'LL FIND IT, AND WHEN HE DOES THE JOB, THE CREDS ARE TAKEN FROM YOUR ACCOUNT . . . JUST LIKE MAGIC.

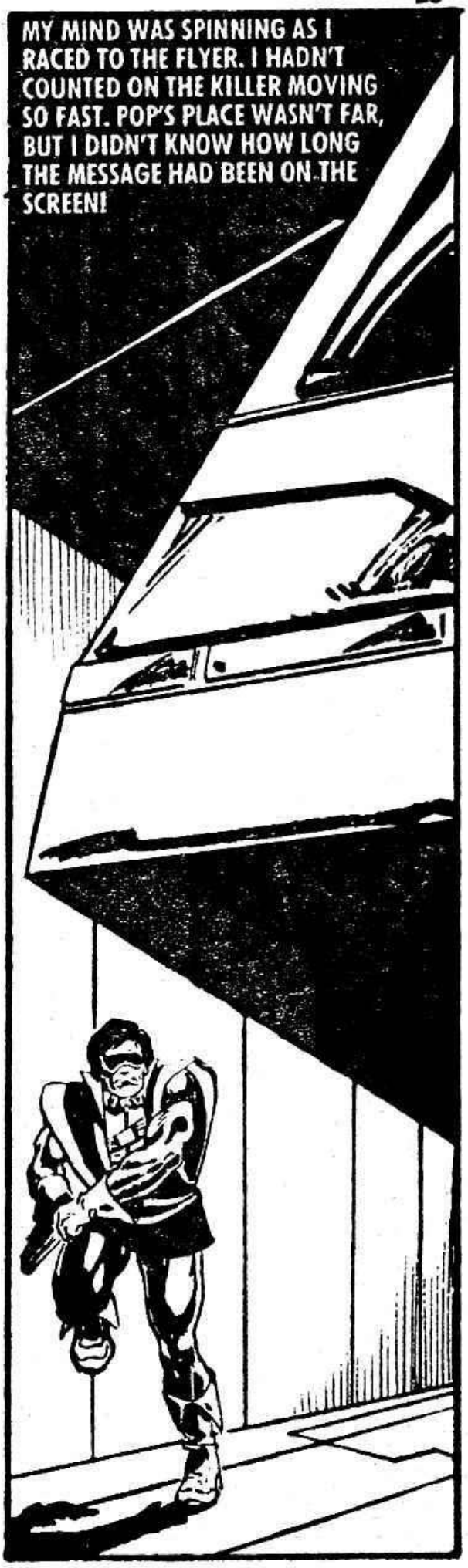
THANK YOU, SMILEY!
A BRILLIANT COMPUTER HACKER, PICKING UP CONTRACTS ON THE NET. DOES THE JOB, TAKES THE MONEY. NO MEETINGS, NO WAY TO LINK HIM WITH A KILLING. ALL I'VE GOT IS A SCREWED-UP PHOTOGRAPH OF A MAN NOBODY'S EVER MET!
I WANT TO PUT OUT A CONTRACT. A GUY NAMED POP PERZ. ADDRESS . . .
SO I KEYED IN 4039 AND GOT A VOICE-ONLY RESPONSE. I'D FIGURED THE ONLY WAY TO GET THIS GUY WAS TO TAKE OUT A CONTRACT.
MESSAGE OVER . . . ALL I HAD TO DO WAS WAIT, SO I FED THE PHOTOGRAPH INTO THE COP NETWORK AND STARTED SCANNING FILES.


ENDLESS FACES FLASHED UP ON THE SCREEN. EVERYONE WHO'D BEEN PARKED IN THE WRONG PLACE AT THE WRONG TIME, OR DROPPED A SWEET WRAPPER ON THE PAVEMENT WAS ON FILE.
F 1340
EVERYBODY EXCEPT HIM.

I'D BEEN THERE FOR THREE HOURS BEFORE I REALISED WHAT A JACKASS I'D BEEN. ANYONE WHO COULD BREAK INTO THE RESEARCH BASE COMPUTER WOULD EASILY BE ABLE TO HACK INTO THE POLICE FILES AND WIPE ANY RECORDS.
STUPID, MIKAL. THINK FOR ONCE IN YOUR LIFE.

SO I HACKED INTO THE NEWSPAPER MORGUE. HOME FOR OLD NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS, DEAD STORIES AND PHOTOGRAPHS. I SET THE COMPUTER TO SCAN THE PICTURES AND FLASH ANY THAT LOOKED SIMILAR UP ONTO THE SCREEN.
I'M TIRED, BUT I MUST KEEP SEARCHING.


AN HOUR LATER I COULDN'T TELL THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE PICTURES FROM THE SPORTS PAGE AND THE PIN-UP PAGE. I ONLY JUST HAD THE ENERGY TO TELL THE COMPUTER TO STORE ANYTHING RELEVANT BEFORE I FELL ASLEEP.
I AWOKE WITH CRAMP IN MY ARMS AND A STIFF NECK. THERE WAS A MESSAGE GLARING DOWN AT ME FROM THE SCREEN.
Pop Perz will be terminated within one hour. Please have one million creds ready in your account. It will be transferred automatically on completion of contract. A failure to transfer the fee will result in your termination. Have a nice day!

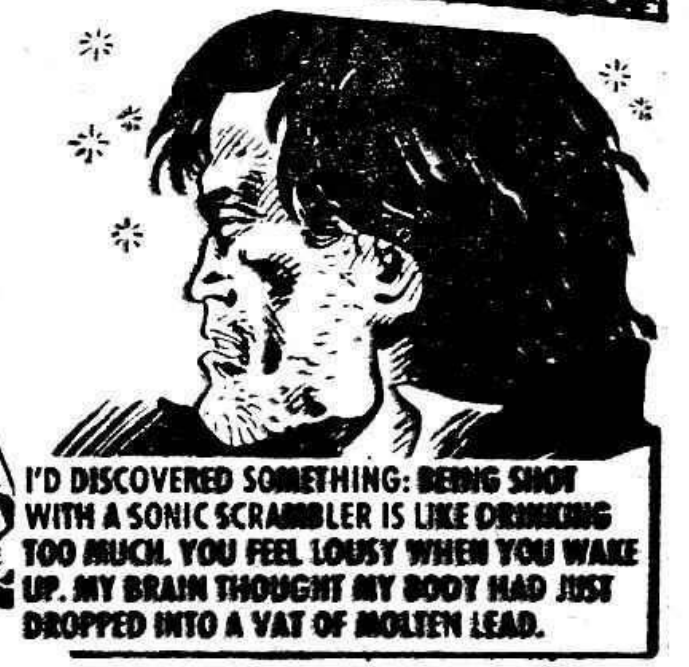

MY MIND WAS SPINNING AS I RACED TO THE FLYER. I HADN'T COUNTED ON THE KILLER MOVING SO FAST. POP'S PLACE WASN'T FAR, BUT I DIDN'T KNOW HOW LONG THE MESSAGE HAD BEEN ON THE SCREEN!

I BROKE EVERY SPEED LIMIT ON THE FREEWAY GETTING TO POP'S APARTMENT.
POP HAD AN APARTMENT THAT COVERED MOST OF THE GROUND FLOOR.
WHAT'S UP, MIKAL?
NOTHING . . . YET!
I NEED DARKNESS . . . TAKE COVER, POP.
CLICK!
I HOPED I WAS STILL IN TIME. I DIDN'T WANT TO THINK ABOUT WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF I WAS TOO LATE.

I COULDN'T HIT A TARGET IF I WAS STANDING ON IT, BUT I HAD TO DO SOMETHING.

THEN THINGS WENT VERY BLACK.
WHAT . . . WHAT'S GOING ON?

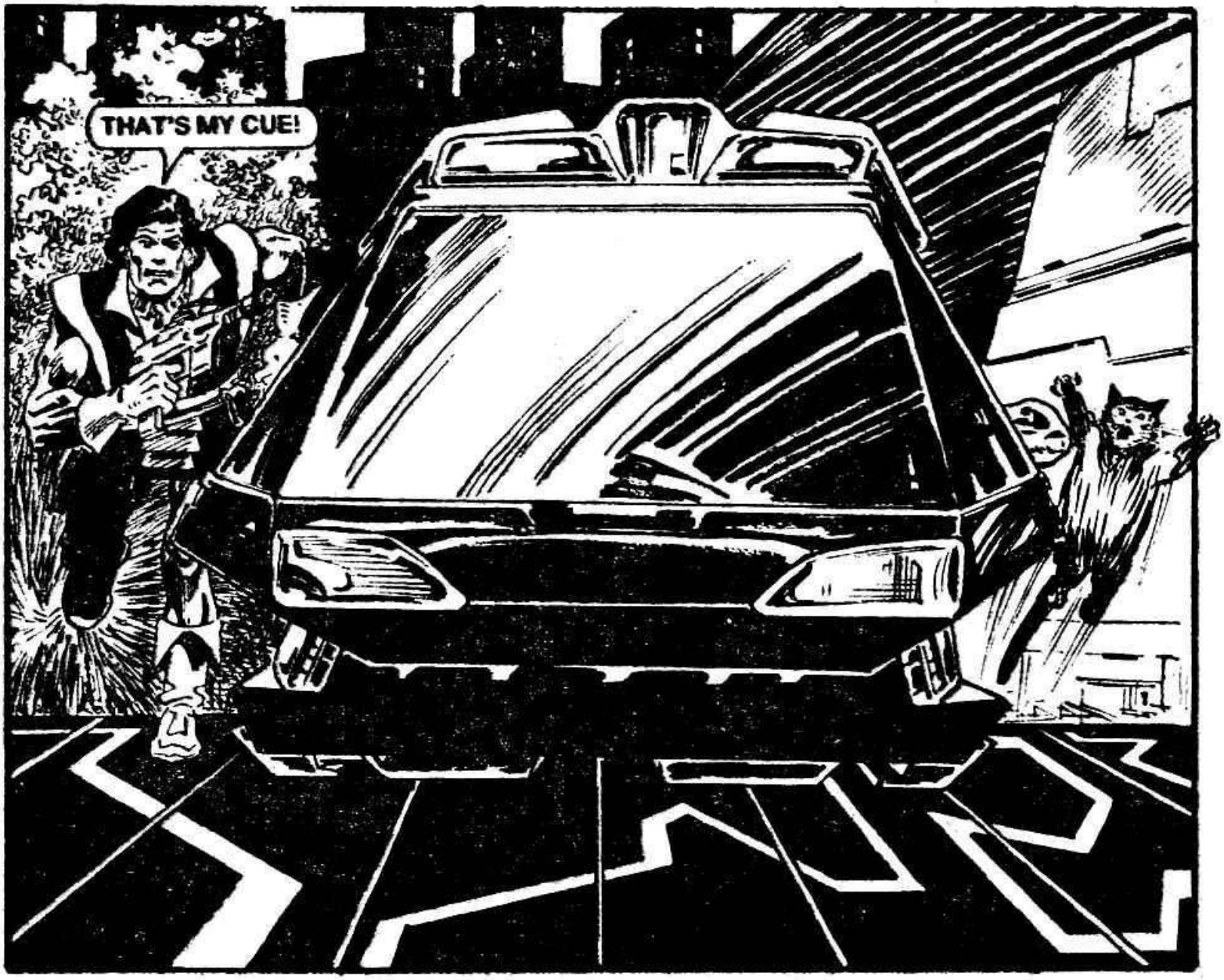
WHAT'S GOING ON? I'M HALF ASLEEP AND SUDDENLY IT'S WORLD WAR FOUR! GOOD THING I'M NOT ANY TALLER OR IT WOULD HAVE BEEN GOODNIGHT VIENNA!


I'D DISCOVERED SOMETHING: BEING SHOT WITH A SONIC SCRAMBLER IS LIKE DRINKING TOO MUCH. YOU FEEL LOUSY WHEN YOU WAKE UP. MY BRAIN THOUGHT MY BODY HAD JUST DROPPED INTO A VAT OF MOLTEN LEAD.

NOT FAR AWAY —
SOMEBODY SET ME UP . . . AND THEY WILL PAY.
I KNEW I HAD TO FOLLOW THE KILLER, BUT MY BODY WOULDN'T RESPOND.
WHAT IS ALL THIS ABOUT?
WELL, THE ONLY WAY I COULD CONFRONT THE KILLER WAS TO TAKE OUT A CONTRACT . . . ER . . . ON YOU!
ON ME? AFTER ALL I'VE DONE FOR YOU.
SORRY, POP . . . BUT I HAVE TO FOLLOW THE KILLER.

HE'S NOT GOING ANYWHERE UNTIL HE'S FINISHED HIS JOB.
POP'S ELECTRONIC CAT VOLUNTEERED TO HELP.
I'M NOT HANGING ABOUT HERE WAITING TO GET MY BUTT BLASTED BY A MANIAC . . . I'M GOING TO FIND HIM AND SCRATCH HIS EYES OUT.
LEAD ON!
HE'S OVER THERE . . . IN HIS FLYER — I'LL ATTRACT HIS ATTENTION — YOU GET HIM.
IT WAD DARK AND I COULD SEE BETTER WITHOUT MY SHADES, BUT PUSSKINS HAD EYES LIKE A . . . LIKE A . . . CAT!

CLAWS OUT . . .
PREPARE TO ATTACK!


THAT'S MY CUE!

WHA . . . GET OFF!
GOOD EVENING . . . I WOULD LIKE TO ASK A FEW QUESTIONS . . .

. . . TAKE ME TO YOUR PLACE, PAL . . . YOU'VE GOT A LOT OF EXPLAINING TO DO!

HE PUT HIS FOOT DOWN . . . AND I HAD TO CLING ON FOR DEAR LIFE. HE ALSO CLUBBED THE GUN OUT OF MY HAND.
WRROOUUOO!!!
ZOC!!!
I TALK TO NO ONE.
HE THEN CLUBBED ME. CLUBBED ME ALMOST OUT OF THE FLYER. I GRABBED FOR THE DOOR FRAME.
AAH!
THE JOLT ALMOST TOOK MY ARM OUT OF ITS SOCKET!

THE WIND TOSSED ME AROUND LIKE A RAG DOLL FOR A FEW SECONDS. THEN SLAMMED ME INTO THE SIDE OF THE CAR.

YOU THINK YOU'RE SO SMART, DON'T YOU!
RIGHT AT THIS MOMENT . . . NO!
OKAY, MR SMART-GUY. GET OUT OF THIS ONE!

WE HIT THE TUNNEL AT 120 KLICKS. IT TOOK THE DOOR OFF THE FLYER. TOOK HIM WITH IT.
AARRGH!

A WALL FLASHING PAST SIX INCHES FROM MY NOSE ISN'T MUCH FUN.
SOME HERO — CAN'T EVEN KEEP MY HAIR TIDY!
WHAT A MESS! I'D JUST LOST MY ONLY LEAD ON WHO TOOK OUT THE CONTRACT ON JERI.

BUT THERE WAS STILL ONE SLIM CHANCE—
I THINK I'VE JUST HIT PAYDIRT. THIS THING'S ON AUTONAV. ALL I HAVE TO DO IS LET THE FLYER TAKE ME HOME!
THE FLYER TOOK ME TO THE HONECKER CONDO! LUXURY-LAND, HOME TO THE IDLE RICH. KILLING OBVIOUSLY PAYS WELL.

THERE WAS NO REPLY WHEN I KNOCKED, BUT THEY SAY MONEY OPENS DOORS. MY OUT OF DATE CREDIT CARD CERTAINLY DID.
EASY
HANDY THINGS, CREDIT CARDS. YOU CAN STILL USE THEM WHEN THE COMPANY WON'T GIVE YOU CREDIT ANY MORE.
INSIDE I FOUND A COMPUTER ADDICT'S PARADISE.
THIS HAS TO BE THE PLACE.

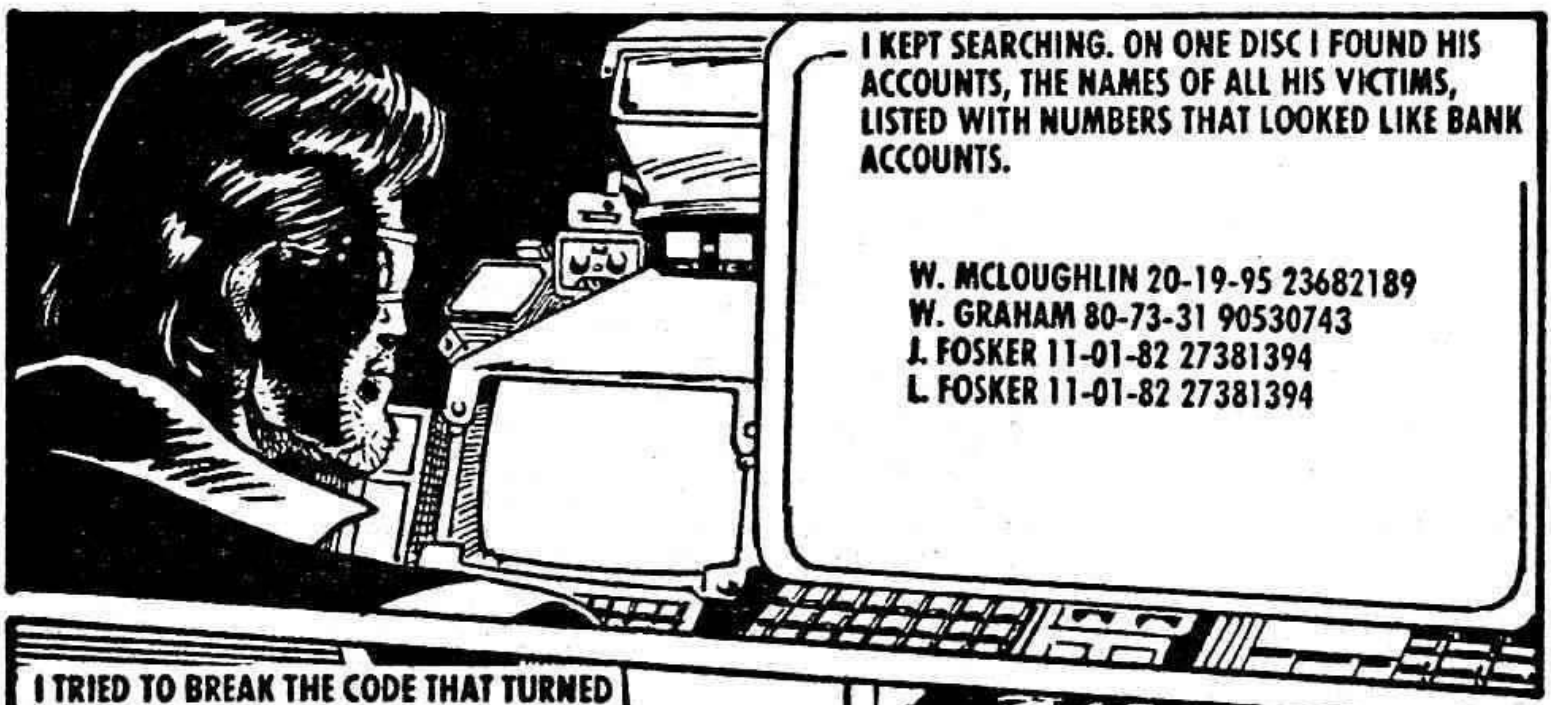
I PRESSED THE LIGHT SWITCH, BUT DIDN'T GET LIGHT. EVERY MONITOR FLICKED ON, CASTING AN EERIE STATIC GLOW OVER EVERYTHING. I SAT DOWN AT ONE OF THE SCREENS AND STARTED SEARCHING.
ZEN
ORAC
MOST OF THE DISCS WERE RECORDS, TECHNICAL DATA. HE HAD FILES ON EVERYTHING AND EVERYONE, AND HE WAS LINKED INTO A NETWORK THAT COVERED EVERY MAJOR COMPUTER SYSTEM. EVENTUALLY I CAME ACROSS SOMETHING I RECOGNISED.
WATCHING IT BROUGHT BACK BAD MEMORIES. I HIT THE SEARCH KEY.

NAME: JERI FOSKER
EDUCATED: NEW MOSCOW STATE SCHOOL
2264-2273, BERLIN UNIVERSEN
2273-2276.
WORK: UNITED WORLDS TAX ASSESSORS.
CASE: ZEIGLER ACCOUNTS AND INVESTMENT
CORPORATION, ZURICH.
ADDRESS: 4735 WEST BERLIN.
TRANS-MAT ENTRY CODE:
ECX629TEC
OH, BOY, OH, BOY! JACKPOT.

THE NEXT PROGRAMME WAS ON TRANS-MATS . . . THE DANGERS OF SENDING MATERIAL OVER LONG DISTANCES. I KNEW HOW HE HAD KILLED LYNDA. IT WAS FRIGHTENINGLY SIMPLE.
ALL LINES OF LONGITUDE MEET AT THE POLES, SO HE SENT A SMALL DENSE OBJECT TO THE SOUTH POLE AND IT WAS AUTOMATICALLY REDIRECTED.

AS IT WAS PROGRAMMED TO TRAVEL TOO FAST, THE TRANS-MAT COULDN'T DAMP DOWN ALL THAT EXTRA ENERGY. WHATEVER HE'D SENT HAD EXPLODED ON ARRIVAL.

NO NEED TO SEND A BOMB. THAT'S WHY FORENSICS COULDN'T FIND EXPLOSIVES.



THE FIRST FIGURE WAS A SORT CODE, SO I KNEW WHICH BANK THE ACCOUNT WAS WITH. TROUBLE WITH BANKS IS THAT THEY DON'T JUST GIVE OUT INFORMATION.
US WITH YOUR SAVINGS
CRASH
EASY $$ LOANS AVAILABLE
1ST STATE SAVINGS A LOANS TRU
NEXT PLEASE!
HAVE A NICE DAY
I FIGURED THAT MY DISGUISE WOULD BE BETTER IF I LEFT MY SHADES OFF.

CAN YOU TELL ME WHERE MONEY FROM THIS ACCOUNT WAS PAID TO?
NO . . . THIS IS A CASH OUT COUNTER ONLY.

I ONLY WANT INFORMATION!
I CAN ONLY GIVE YOU MONEY.

HAND OVER THE INFORMATION!
I CAN'T . . . THIS IS A CASH OUT COUNTER. I CAN HAND OVER 27 MILLION.

PLEASE TAKE MONEY.
CREDS? I DON'T WANT CREDS — I JUST WANT TO KNOW WHERE MONEY WENT FROM THIS ACCOUNT.
B-B-BUT I'VE JUST ORDERED A WITHDRAWAL!

THE DISPENSER STARTED TO SPEW OUT CREDS . . . TO THE DELIGHT OF THE OTHER CUSTOMERS.
JUST GIVE ME THE NAME!
I CAN'T! TAKE MONEY! IT'S OUR STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE WHEN WE ARE BEING ROBBED.

WHEN SECURITY ARRIVED I DECIDED I'D HAD ENOUGH.

I WAS THE ONLY ONE WHO HADN'T HELPED HIMSELF SO SECURITY WASN'T INTERESTED IN ME.
HAVE A NICE DAY.
MAD . . . THEY'RE ALL MAD!

OH, WELL, IT SEEMED LIKE A GOOD IDEA AT THE TIME.

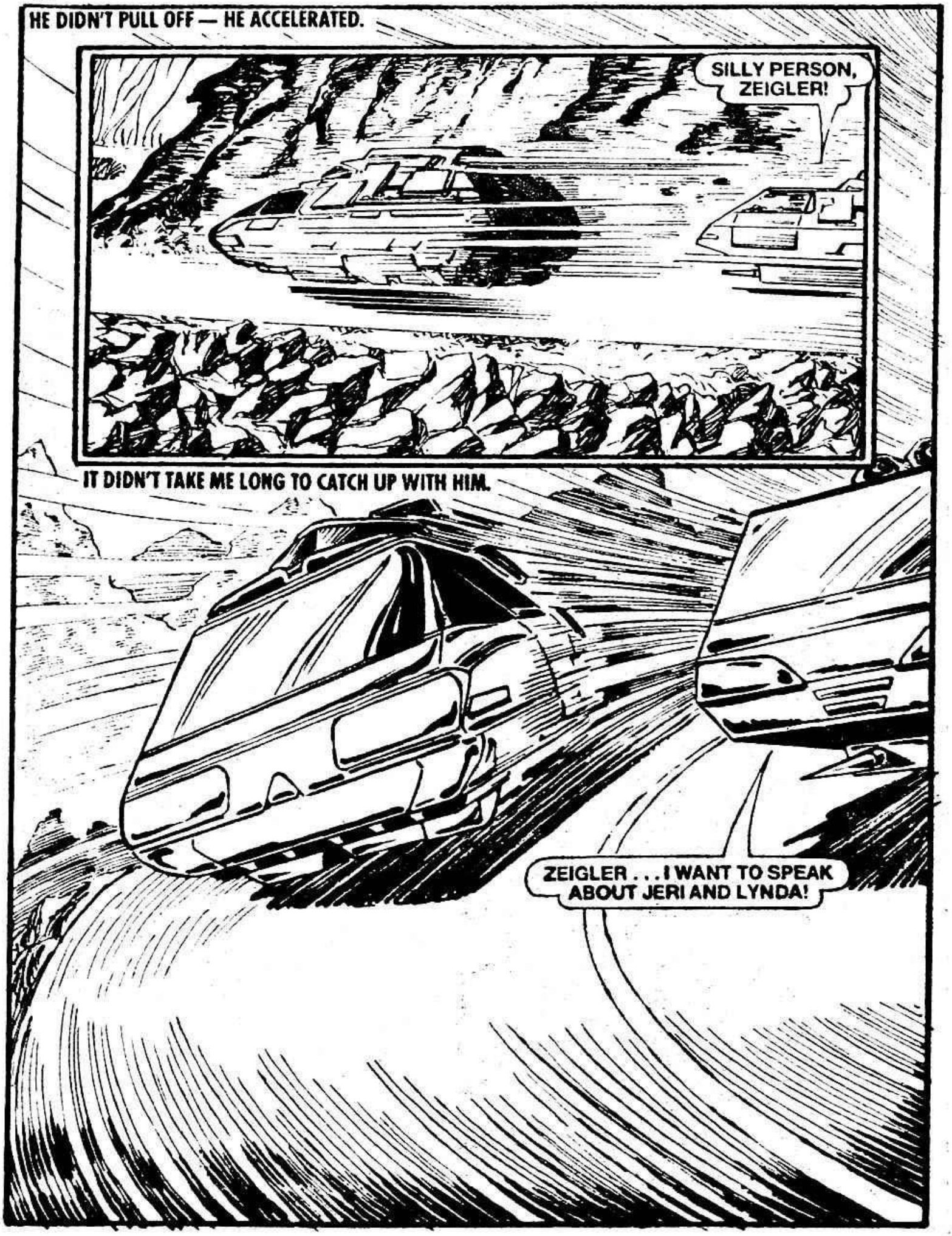
THEN I HAD ANOTHER BRILLIANT IDEA. WHAT IF JERI'S DEATH HAD SOMETHING TO DO WITH HIS WORK. HE'D BEEN WORKING ON THE ZEIGLER ACCOUNTS IN SWITZERLAND. SO I CONTACTED POP.
ZEIGLER COULD HAVE SOMETHING TO DO WITH THIS, SO I'M OFF TO SWITZERLAND.
THE COPS HAVE BEEN ROUND — SOMETHING ABOUT YOU AND A BANK!
YES . . . FORGET IT, POP, I DIDN'T STEAL A THING.

I DON'T KNOW IF I BELIEVE YOU. YOUR FLYER IS STILL HERE.
I PICKED UP THE FLYER AND HEADED OUT TO PLAY A HUNCH.
I'LL PICK IT UP RIGHT AWAY. I'LL SEE YOU LATER . . . I HAVE SOME BUSINESS TO FINISH OFF.

WHILE I WAS AT THE KILLER'S CONDO I'D TAKEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO LINK UP MY OFFICE COMPUTER TO HIS NETWORK.
ZEIGLER BUILDING ZURICH
IF I'M WRONG, IT'S GOODBYE MIKAL!

I'D PROGRAMMED IT SO ZEIGLER RECEIVED THE SAME MESSAGE THAT JERI HAD BEEN GIVEN. I DON'T KNOW WHAT I THOUGHT WOULD HAPPEN . . . BUT I GOT A VERY POSITIVE REACTION.
ZEIGLER . . . AND IN A BIG HURRY.

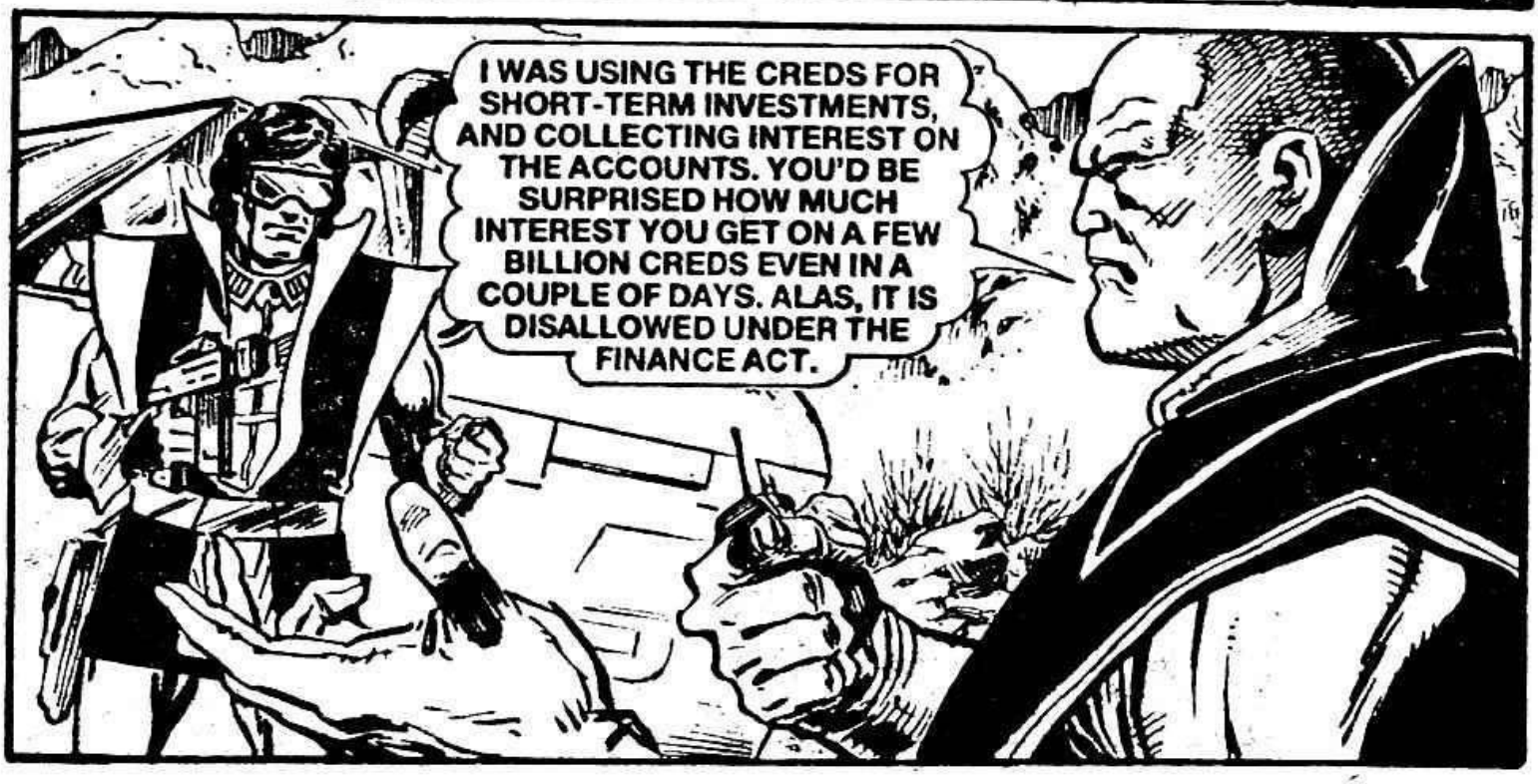
I TAILED HIM OUT OF THE CITY. ONCE WE WERE ON THE MOUNTAIN AUTOWAY I KEYED IN A VID-CALL . . .
ZEIGLER! PULL OFF AT THE NEXT SLIPWAY. WE HAVE SOME THINGS TO DISCUSS.


HE DIDN'T PULL OFF — HE ACCELERATED.
SILLY PERSON, ZEIGLER!
IT DIDN'T TAKE ME LONG TO CATCH UP WITH HIM.
ZEIGLER . . . I WANT TO SPEAK ABOUT JERI AND LYNDA!

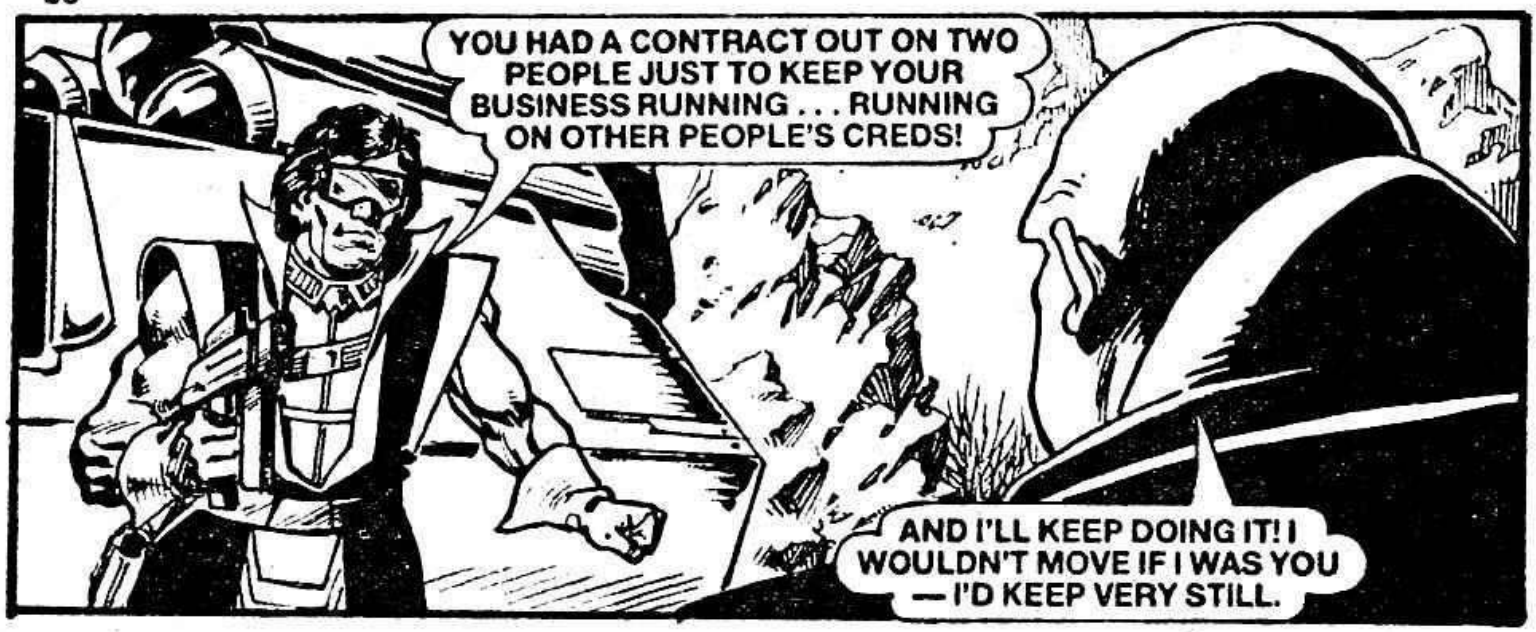
WHO?
GROUND THE FLYER, ZEIGLER, AND I'LL TELL YOU!
HE PULLED DOWN, AND I DROPPED THE FLYER TO THE ROAD NEARBY, AND INTRODUCED MYSELF.
WHAT DO YOU WANT?

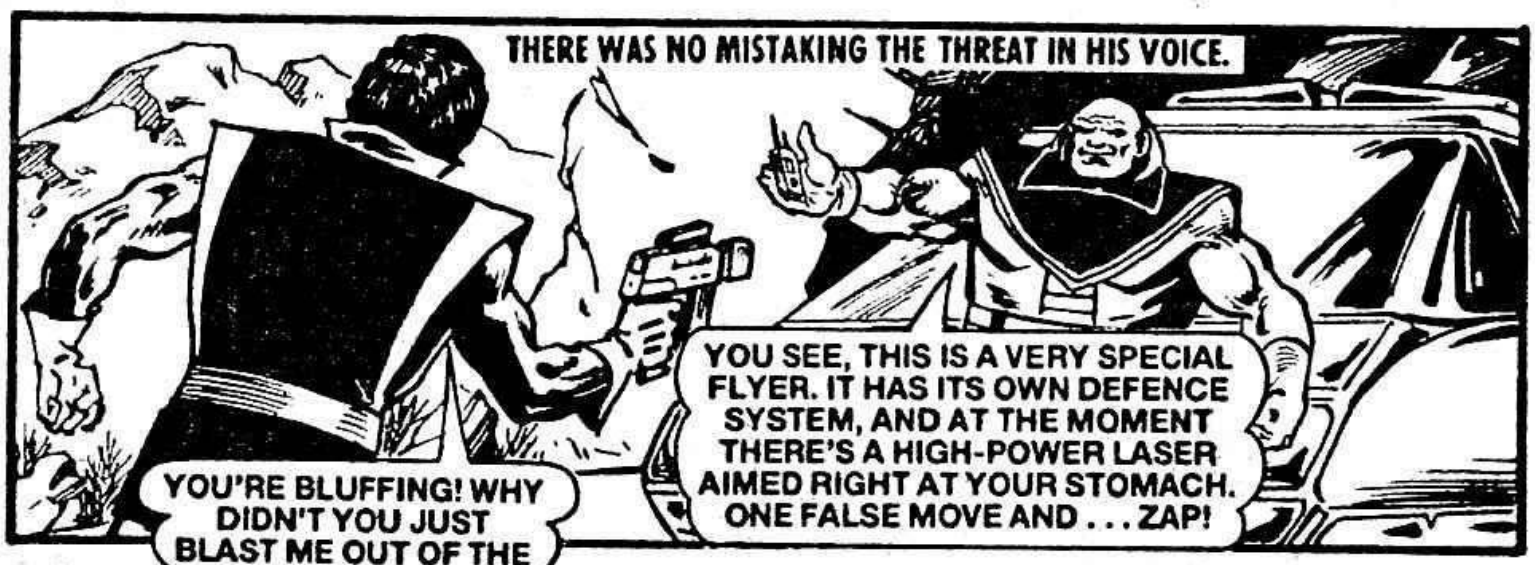
I WANT TO KNOW WHY YOU PUT OUT A CONTRACT ON JERI AND LYNDA FOSKER. HE WAS A TAX ASSESSOR.
SO THAT WAS HIS NAME! SNOOPING RAT WAS PRYING INTO MY AFFAIRS. HE WAS DAMAGING MY CREDIBILITY.

SO YOU HAD HIM KILLED FOR THAT?
NO! HE WOULD HAVE DISCOVERED THAT I HAD TRANSFERRED CLIENTS' MONEY TO ONE OF MY SPECIAL ACCOUNTS.

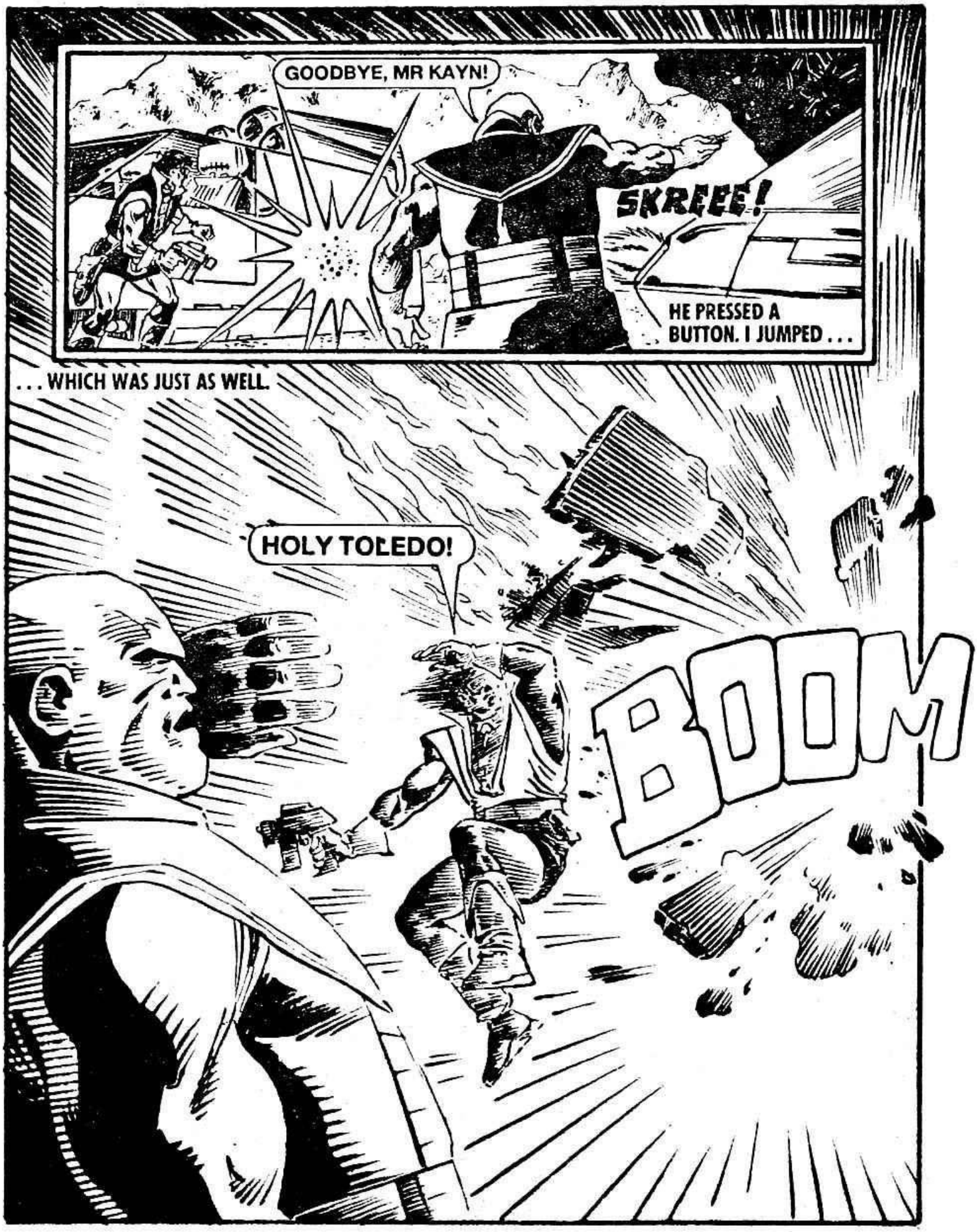

I WAS USING THE CREDS FOR SHORT-TERM INVESTMENTS, AND COLLECTING INTEREST ON THE ACCOUNTS. YOU'D BE SURPRISED HOW MUCH INTEREST YOU GET ON A FEW BILLION CREDS EVEN IN A COUPLE OF DAYS. ALAS, IT IS DISALLOWED UNDER THE FINANCE ACT.

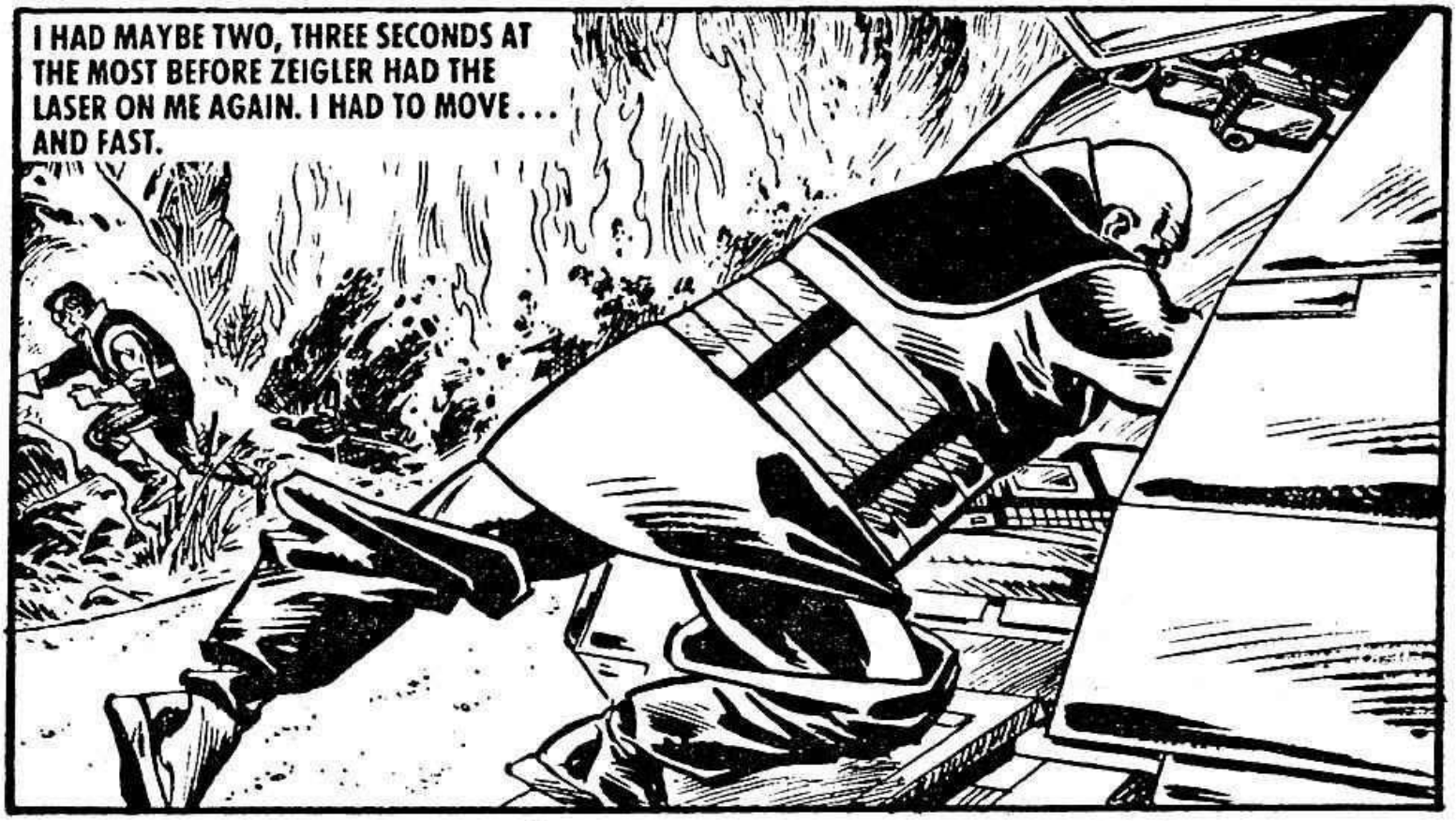
SO YOU HAD HIM AND HIS WIFE KILLED — SHE WOULDN'T HAVE KNOWN ANYTHING ABOUT IT.
BUT HE MIGHT HAVE SPOKEN TO HER . . . SHE HAD TO GO!


YOU HAD A CONTRACT OUT ON TWO PEOPLE JUST TO KEEP YOUR BUSINESS RUNNING . . . RUNNING ON OTHER PEOPLE'S CREDS!
AND I'LL KEEP DOING IT! I WOULDN'T MOVE IF I WAS YOU — I'D KEEP VERY STILL.


THERE WAS NO MISTAKING THE THREAT IN HIS VOICE.
YOU'RE BLUFFING! WHY DIDN'T YOU JUST BLAST ME OUT OF THE SKY?
YOU SEE, THIS IS A VERY SPECIAL FLYER. IT HAS ITS OWN DEFENCE SYSTEM, AND AT THE MOMENT THERE'S A HIGH-POWER LASER AIMED RIGHT AT YOUR STOMACH. ONE FALSE MOVE AND . . . ZAP!

I HAD TO KNOW HOW MUCH YOU KNEW, BUT YOU DIDN'T KNOW ANYTHING AT ALL — AND WHAT YOU'VE JUST LEARNED IS GOING TO DIE WITH YOU.
MY HUNCH ABOUT ZEIGLER WAS RIGHT, BUT, ALAS, IT LOOKED A FATAL HUNCH.


GOODBYE, MR KAYN!
SKREEE!
HE PRESSED A BUTTON. I JUMPED . . .
. . . WHICH WAS JUST AS WELL.
HOLY TOLEDO!
BOOM


I HAD MAYBE TWO, THREE SECONDS AT THE MOST BEFORE ZEIGLER HAD THE LASER ON ME AGAIN. I HAD TO MOVE . . . AND FAST.

I MADE IT TO COVER JUST IN TIME.
I'M A SITTING DUCK!

IF I DON'T FINISH THIS QUICKLY I'M GOING TO BE A ROASTED DUCK!
I HAD TO HIT THE RIGHT SPOT.

AS HE PASSED OVER ME I TWISTED AND FIRED AT THE FUEL TANKS.
CHOMP
MY BLASTER ISN'T POWERFUL ENOUGH TO PENETRATE ITS HULL!

I NEED SOME HEAVY ARTILLERY IF I'M GOING TO MAKE A DENT IN ZEIGLER'S CRAFT.
LOOSE ROCK! THE EXPLOSION MUST HAVE LOOSENED THE SIDE OF THE CLIFF.

I NOTCHED UP THE SETTING ON THE BLASTER SO THAT IT WAS OVERLOADING THE POWER PACK. THEN I TOSSED IT UNDER AN OVERHANG.
SKROOM!
PLEASE BLOW UP NOW!

IT DID!
BOOM!!

THE COLLAPSING ROCK CAUGHT THE BACK OF THE VEHICLE AND BOUNCED ZEIGLER DOWN THE ROAD . . .
CRASH!
SKRIIIIII!!
BOOM!
. . . THEN THE FUEL TANKS WENT UP!

G'BYE, ZEIGLER!
BOOM!

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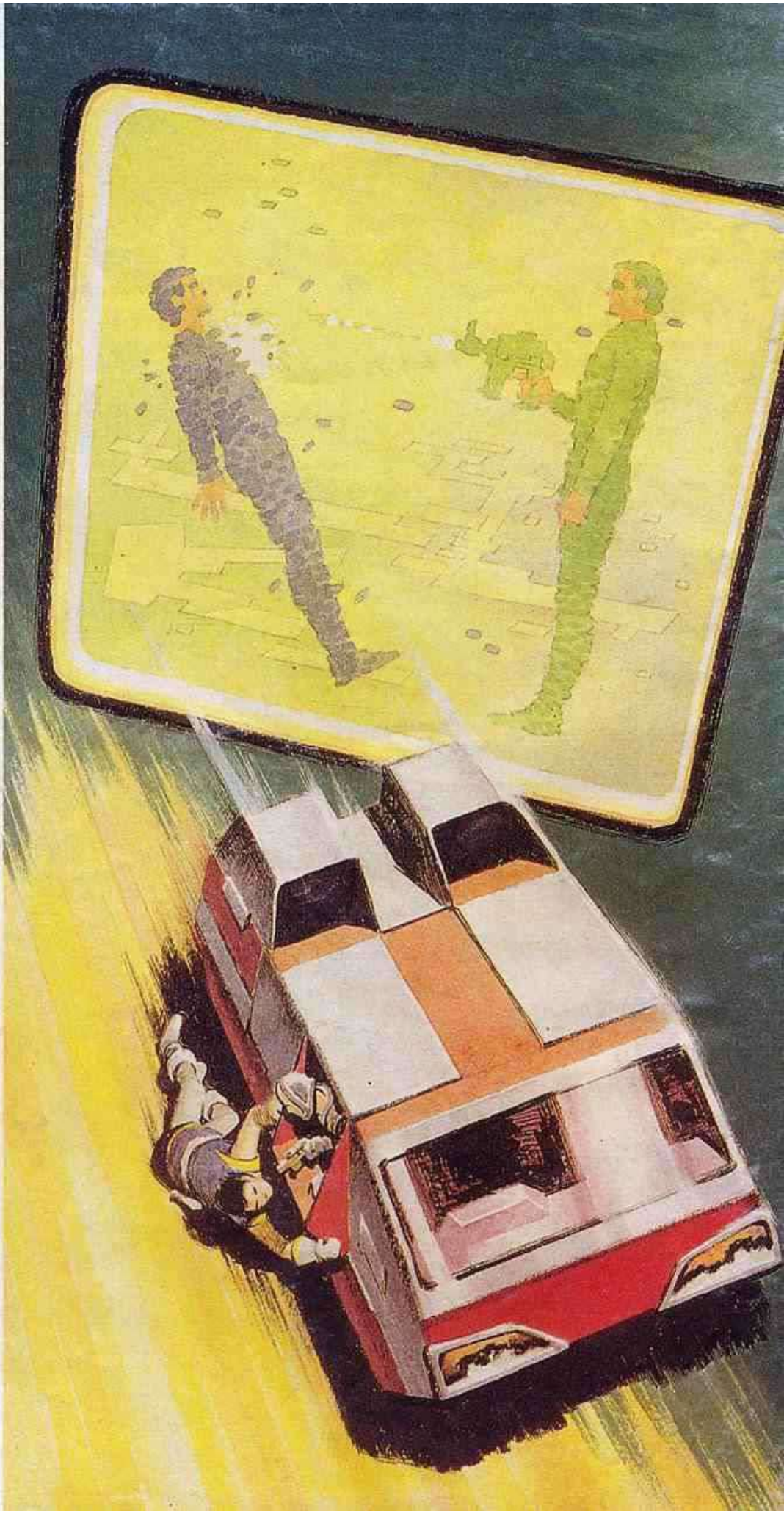
COMPUTER KILLER

My name's Kayn and I'm broke. I'm also tired and hungry, but that's a condition of my job. Y'see, I'm a private eye in downtown New Moscow, and not a lot of work comes my way . . . well not the stuff that pays enough to keep me even in the lap of poverty. I used to be in the Star Corps, cops to you, but a slight accident with an atomic generator rendered my eyes less than perfect. That's why I'm in private sector detection. Anyway, as I was saying . . . er, excuse me, the phone's ringing . . . don't go away . . .